DELUSION;

OR THE

WITCH OF NEW ENGLAND.

"There is in man a HIGHER than love of happiness: he can do without happiness, and, instead thereof, find blessedness." — SARTOR.

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PREFACE.

THE scenes and characters of this little tale are wholly fictitious. It will be found that the tragic interest that belongs to the history of the year 1692 has been very much softened in the following pages.

The object of the author has not been to write a tale of witchcraft, but to show how circumstances may unfold the inward strength of a timid woman, so that she may at last be willing to die rather than yield to the delusion that would have preserved her life.

If it is objected that the young and lovely are seldom accused of any witchcraft except that of bewitching hearts, we answer, that of those who were *actually* accused, many were young; and those who maintained a firm integrity against the overwhelming power of the delusion of the period must have possessed an intellectual beauty which it would be vain to endeavor to portray.

This imperfect effort is submitted with much diffidence, to the indulgence of the courteous reader.

THE

WITCH OF NEW ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

"Ay, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trod:
They have left unstained what there they found, —
Freedom to worship God."

New England scenery is said to be deficient in romantic and poetic associations. It is said that we have no ruins of ancient castles, frowning over our precipices; no time-worn abbeys and monasteries, mouldering away in neglected repose, in our valleys.

It is true that the grand and beautiful places in our natural scenery are not marred by the monuments of an age of violence and wrong; and our silent valleys retain no remnant of the abodes of self-indulgent and superstitious devotion; but the descendant of the Pilgrims finds, in many of the fairest scenes of New England, some memento to

carry back the imagination to those heroic and self-sacrificing ancestors. His soul is warmed and elevated when he remembers that devoted company, who were sustained amid hardship and every privation, on the trackless ocean, and in the mysterious and appalling solitudes of the forest, by a firm devotion to duty, and an all-pervading sense of the immediate presence of God.

The faults of our ancestors were the faults of their age. It is not now understood — and how wide from it was the conviction then! — that *even* toleration implies intoleration. Who is to judge what opinions are to be tolerated? He whom circumstance has invested at the moment with power?

The scene I wish to describe was on the borders of one of the interior villages of New England, — a mountain village, embosomed in high hills, from which the winter torrents, as they met in the plain, united to form one of those clear, sparkling rivers, in whose beautiful mirror the surrounding hills were reflected. The stream, "winding at its own sweet will," enclosed a smooth meadow. At the extremity of the meadow, and shadowed by the mountain, nestled one of the poorest farm-houses, or cottages, of the time.

It was black and old, apparently containing but two rooms and a garret. Attached to it were the common out-houses of the poorest farms: a shed for a cow, a covering for a cart, and a small barn were all. But the situation of this humble and lonely dwelling was one of surpassing beauty. The soft meadow in front was dotted with weeping elms and birches; the opposite and neighboring hills were covered to their summits with the richest wood, while openings here and there admitted glimpses of the distant country.

A traveller coming upon this solitary spot, and seeing the blue smoke curling against the mountain side, would have rejoiced. There is something in the lonely farm-house, surrounded with its little garden, and its homely implements of labor, that instantly touches our sympathy. There, we say, human hearts have experienced all the changes of life; they have loved and rejoiced, perhaps suffered and died.

The interior consisted of only two rooms. In the ample chimney of that which served for the common room, was burning a bright flame of pine knots; for, although it was the middle of summer, the sun sank so early behind the hills, and the evenings were so

chilly, that the warmth was necessary, and the light from the small window cheered the laborer returning late from his work.

An old man sat by the chimney, evidently resting from the labors of the day. He was bent by time, but his brilliant eye and his flowing gray locks gave a certain refinement to his appearance, beyond that which his homely garments would warrant.

A woman, apparently as aged as himself, sat by the little window, catching the last rays of evening, as they were reflected from her white cap and silvery hair. Before her was a table on which lay a large Bible. She had just placed her spectacles between the leaves, as she closed it and resumed her knitting.

These two formed a picture full of the quiet repose of old age. But there was another in the room, — a youth, apparently less than twenty, kneeling before the flaming pine, over the leaves of a worn volume that absorbed him wholly.

The ruddy flame imparted the glow of health to a countenance habitually pale. Over his dark, enthusiastic eye was spread a clear and noble brow, so smooth and polished that it seemed as if at seventy it would be as unwrinkled as at seventeen. His piercing

eye had that depth of expression that indicates dark passions or religious melancholy. He was slender in form, and very tall; but a bend in the shoulders, produced by agricultural labor, or by weakness in the chest, impaired somewhat the symmetry of his form.

They had been silent some moments. The young man closed his worn volume, an imperfect copy of Virgil, and walked several times, with hurried steps, across the little room.

At length he stopped before the woman, and said, "Mother, let me see how much your frugal care has hoarded. Let me know all our wealth. Unless I can procure another book, I cannot be prepared for the approaching examination. If I cannot enter college the next term, I never can. I must give up all hope of ever being any thing but the drudge I am now, and of living and dying in this narrow nook of earth."

"No no, my son," answered the woman; "if my prayers are heard, you will be a light and a blessing to the church, though I may not live to see it."

The young man sighed deeply, and, taking the key she gave him, he opened an old-fashioned chest, and, from a little cup of silver

tied over with a piece of leather, he poured the contents into his hand. There were several crowns and shillings, and two or three pieces of gold.

Appararently the examination was unsatisfactory, for he threw himself into a chair, and covered his face with his hands.

The old woman rose after looking at him a few moments in silence, and laid her hand gently on his shoulder.

"My son," she said, "where is the faith that sustained your ancestors when they left all their luxuries and splendor, their noble homes for conscience' sake. Yes, my son, your fathers were among the distinguished of England's sons, and they left all for God."

"Mother," said he, "would that they had been hewers of wood and drawers of water. Then I should have been content with my lot. Mother, all your carefully hoarded treasure will not be enough to pay my first term in college. Without books, without friends, I must give up the hope of an education," and the large tears trickled between his fingers.

"You forget," she said, "your good friend at C. who has lent you so many books. Why not apply to him again?"

A deep blush flushed the young man's countenance, but he made no answer, and seemed to wish to change the subject.

"It is almost evening," he said; "shall we not have prayers?" and, placing himself near the window to catch the last rays of departing daylight, he read one of the chapters from the Old Testament.

The aged man, who had not spoken during the discussion, stood up and prayed with great fervency.

His prayer was made up, indeed, by quotations from the Old Testament, and he used altogether the phraseology of the Scriptures. He prayed for the church in the wilderness, "that it might be bright as the sun, fair as the moon, beautiful as Tirzah, and terrible as an army with banners;" "that our own exertions to serve the church and our strivings after the Holy Spirit might not be like arrows in the air, traces in the sea, oil upon the polished marble, and water spilt upon the ground."

He asked for no temporal blessing; all his petitions were in language highly figurative, and he closed with a prayer for his grandson, "that God would make him a polished shaft in the temple of the Lord, a bright and

shining light in the candlestick of the church."

When he had finished his prayer, — "My son," he said, "do not be cast down; you forget that the great Luther begged his bread. The servants of the church, in every age, have been poor and despised; even the Son of God," and he looked reverently upwards, "knew not where to lay his head. *You* have only to labor. The peat at the bottom of the meadow is already dry; there is more than we shall need for winter fuel; take it, in the morning, to C——, and with the produce buy the book you need."

"No," said the young man, "there are many repairs necessary to make you and my grandmother comfortable for the winter. I cannot rob you of more. I can borrow the book."

He lighted his lamp, made from rushes dipped in the green wax of the bay bush, which affords a beautiful, but not brilliant flame, and went up a few steps to his chamber in the garret. The old woman gathered the ashes over the kindling coal, and, with her aged partner, retired to the bed-room opposite the narrow entrance.

CHAPTER II.

"Deep thought oft seemed to fix his infant eye;
Silent when glad, affectionate, though shy:
And now his look was most demurely sad,
And now he laughed aloud, yet none knew why:
The neighbors stared and sighed, yet blessed the lad;
Some deemed him wondrous wise, and some believed him mad."

BEATTIE.

OUR young student retired to his garret, a small room in the roof of the cottage, heated by the summer sun resting on its roof almost to the heat of a furnace. One small window looking towards the east admitted the evening breeze.

In the remotest corner was a low and narrow pallet, by the side of which hung the indispensable articles of a man's apparel.

A small table, covered with ink spots, and a solitary chair stood in the centre of the little apartment. A few deal shelves contained the odd and worn volumes of the student's library. A Greek Testament, several lexicons, half a volume of Horace, lay scattered on the table. Virgil was the book he had brought with him from the pine-knot torch,

and it was the old Grecian, Homer that he was so anxious to possess.

The uncarpeted floor was thickly strewn with sheets half written over, and torn manuscripts were scattered about. Wherever the floor was visible, the frequent ink spots indicated that it was not without mental agitation that these manuscripts had been produced.

It was not to repose from the labors of the day that the young man entered his little chamber: to bodily labor must now succeed mental toil.

He cast a wistful look towards his little pallet; he longed to rest his limbs, aching with the labor of the day; but no; his lamp was on the table, and, resolutely throwing off his coarse frock, he sat down to think and to write.

Wearied by a long day of labor, the student in vain tried to collect his thoughts, to calm his weakened nerves. He rose and walked his chamber with rapid steps, the drops of heat and anguish resting on his brow.

"Oh!" said he, "that I had been content to remain the clod, the toil-worn slave that I am!"

Little do they know, who have leisure and

wealth, and all the appurtenances of literary ease — the lolling study-chair, the convenient apartment, the brilliant light — how much those suffer who indulge in aspirations beyond their lowly fortune.

The student sat down again to write. His hands were icy cold, while his eyes and brow were burning hot. He was engaged on a translation from the Greek. His efforts to collect and concentrate his thoughts on his work, exhausted as he was with toil, were vain and unavailing. At length he threw down his pen.

"Oh God!" thought he, "is this madness? am I losing my memory, my mind?" Again he walked his little room, but with gentler steps; for he would not disturb his aged relatives, who slept beneath.

"Have I deceived myself?" he said; "were all my aspirations only delusions, when, yet a boy, I followed the setting sun, and the rainbow hues of the evening clouds, with a full heart that could only find relief in tears? — when I believed myself destined to be other than a hewer of wood and a drawer of water, because I felt an immeasurable pity for my fellow-men, groping, as I did myself,

under all the evils of ignorance and sin? Was it only vanity, when I hoped to rise above the clods of the earth, and aspired to have my lips, as Isaiah's, touched by a coal from the holy altar? Was it only impatience at my lot which destined me to inexorable poverty?"

"Let me not despair of myself;" and he took from his table a manuscript of two or three sheets, and began to read it.

As he went on, his dissatisfaction seemed to increase. With the sensitiveness and humility of true genius, when under the influence of despondency, every line seemed to him feeble or exaggerated; all the faults glared out in bold relief; while the real beauty of the composition escaped his jaded and toil-worn attention.

"Oh Heaven!" he said, "I have deceived myself; I am no genius, able to rise above the lowliness of my station. The bitter cup of poverty is at my lips. I have not even the power to purchase a single book. Shall I go again to my good friend at C——? Shall I appear as a beggar, or a peasant, to beg the trifling pittance of a book?

A burning blush for a moment passed over his pale countenance. "Will they not say,

and justly, 'Go back to your plough; it is your destiny and proper vocation to labor?'"

He sat down on the side of his little pallet, and burst into tears. He wept long, and, as he wept, his mind became more calm. The short summer's night, in its progress, had bathed the earth in darkness, and cooled the heated roof of his little apartment. The night breeze, as it came in at his window, chilled him, and he rose to close it.

As he looked from his little window, the dawn was just appearing in the east, and the planet Venus, shining with the soft light of a crescent moon, was full before him.

"O beautiful star!" he thought, "the same that went before the sages of the East, and guided them to the manger of the Savior! I aspire only to be a teacher of the sublime wisdom of that humble manger. Let me but lift up my weak voice in his cause, and let all worldly ambition die within me.

'——Thou, O Spirit! who dost prefer,
Before all temples, th' upright heart and pure,'

I consecrate my powers to thee."

The morning breeze, as it blew on his temples, refreshed him. The young birds began to make those faint twitterings beneath

the downy breast of the mother, the first faint sound that breaks the mysterious silence of early dawn.

He turned from the window; the rush-light was just expiring in its rude candlestick. He threw himself on his bed, and was soon lost in deep and dreamless slumbers.

CHAPTER III.

"I give thee to thy God,— the God that gave thee
A well-spring of deep gladness to my heart!
And, precious as thou art,
And pure as dew of Hermon, He shall have thee!
My own, my beautiful, my undefiled!
And thou shalt be his child."

WHILE the student sleeps, we will make the reader acquainted with his short and simple annals.

His maternal grandfather had been among the Puritan emigrants who sought the rock-bound coast of New England. He was a man of worth and property, had been educated at Oxford, and distinguished for classical learning and elegant pursuits. But at the call of conscience he left the luxurious halls of his fathers, the rank, and ancestral honors that would have descended to him, to share the hardships, privations, and sufferings of the meanest of his companions. He brought with him his wife and an only child, a daughter of twenty years.

Like her mother, she had been carefully nurtured, and had lived in much luxury,

although in the strict seclusion of the daughters of the Puritans.

The wives and daughters of the Pilgrims have never been honored as they deserved to be. Except the Lady Arbella Johnson, is there a single name that has descended with pride and honor to their daughters, and been cherished as a Puritan saint?

It is true they lived in an age when the maxim that a woman should consider it her highest praise to have nothing said about her was in full force; and when the remark of Coleridge would have been applauded, "That the perfection of a woman's character is to be *characterless.*"

But among the wives of the Pilgrims there were heroic women that endured silently every calamity. Mrs. Hemans says, with poetry and truth,—

> "*There* was woman's *fearless* eye,
> Lit by her deep love's truth."

But how many *fearful* days and nights they must have passed, trembling with all a mother's timidity for their children, when they heard the savage cry, that spared neither the touching smile of infancy, nor the agonized prayer of woman!

They had left the comforts, and even the luxuries, of their English homes, — the hour-

ly attendance of servants, to meet the chilling skies of a shelterless wilderness. She whose foot had trodden the softest carpets, whose bed had been of down, who had been accustomed to those minute attentions that prevent the rose-leaf from being crumpled, must now labor with her own hands, endure the cold of the severest winter, and leave herself unsheltered; all she asked was to guard her infant children from suffering, and aid by her sympathy, her husband.

It is indeed true, that the sentiment of love or religion has power to elevate above all physical suffering, and to ennoble all those homely cares and humble offices that are performed for the beloved object with a smile of patient endurance; and it asks, in return, but confidence and tenderness.

The wife of Mr. Seymore soon sank under the hardships of the times, and the severity of the climate of New England. Her grave was made in the solitude of the overshadowing forest, and her daughter, who had brought with her a fine, hardy, English constitution, lived to console her widowed father.

He died about five years after his wife, and then his daughter married an Englishman of small fortune, who had come over with his

family : his father and mother, both advanced in life, had settled on the small farm we have attempted to describe. He built the cottage for his parents, and then, with his wife, the mother of our young friend Seymore, returned to England.

She lived not long after her return. The religious enthusiasm of the time had taken possession of her mind, and, before her death, she dedicated this, her only child, to the service of the church, and requested her husband to send him to America, where poverty presented no insurmountable barrier to his success.

His father, in sending him to America in his twelfth year, promised to advance something for his education ; but unfortunate circumstances prevented, and the boy was left to make his own fortune under the roof of his grandparents.

His disappointment was great to find his grandparents in so narrow circumstances, and himself condemned to so obscure a station. He had aspirations, as we have seen, beyond his humble circumstances. The few books he brought with him were his consolation. They were read, reread, and committed to memory ; and then he longed for more. An accident, or what we term an accident — the

instrument that Providence provides to shape our destiny — threw some light upon the gloom that seemed to have settled on his prospects.

He met at C——, where he had gone on some business connected with his agricultural labors, the clergyman of the place.

Mr. Grafton was interested by his fine intellectual expression, and pleased with the refined and intelligent remarks that seemed unsuited to his coarse laborer's frock and peasant's dress.

He took him to his house, lent him the books that were necessary to prepare him for our young college, and promised his aid to have him placed on the list of those indigent scholars who were devoted to the church.

From this time his industry and ambition were redoubled, and we have seen the poor aspirant for literary distinction striving to unite two things which must at last break down the body or the mind, — heavy daily labor, with severe mental toil at night.

He was young and strong; his health did not immediately fail, and we must now leave him where thousands of our young men have been left, with aspirations and hopes beyond their humble fortunes.

CHAPTER IV.

"Ay, thou art welcome, heaven's delicious breath!
When woods begin to wear the crimson leaf,
And suns grow meek, and the meek suns grow brief,
And the year smiles as it draws near its death:
Wind of the sunny south, O, still delay!"

BRYANT.

IT was the close of one of those mild days at the end of October, that we call the Indian summer, corresponding to the St. Martin summer of the eastern continent, although the latter is wanting in some of the essential elements of beauty that belong to ours.

The sun was setting in veiled and softened light, while a transparent mist, like a silver gauze, was drawn over woods and hills and meadows. The gorgeous robe of autumn gave to the landscape an air of festivity and triumph, while the veil of mist, and the death-like silence, seemed as if happy nature had been arrested in a moment of joy, and turned into a mourner. The intense stillness pressed on the heart. No chirp of bird or hum of insect broke the deep silence. From

time to time a leaf, "yellow and sere," loosened, as it were, by invisible fingers from the stem, lingered a second on its way, and fell noiselessly to the earth. In the deep distant wood, the sound of the ripe nuts as they fell, and, at long intervals, the shrill cry of the squirrel, came to the ear, and interrupted the revery of the solitary wanderer.

The scene I would describe was bounded on one side by high rocks and the vast ocean, but sloping towards the land into soft and undulating beauty. A noble river was on one side, and on the promontory thus formed were left some of the largest trees of the forest that covered the whole country when our fathers first arrived. Although so near the ocean, the scene had a character of tranquil sylvan beauty strangely contrasted with the ocean when agitated by storms.

One of the largest villages of the time was on the opposite bank of the river; but, as there was no bridge, the place I would describe was almost as solitary as if man had never invaded it. The trees upon it were the largest growth of elm and oak, and seemed left to shelter a single dwelling, a house of moderate size, but which had much the appearance of neatness and comfort.

A few rods from the house, and still nearer the headland, stood the plain New England meeting-house of that period, — square, barn-like, unpainted, solitary, but for the silent tenants of its grave-yard. A grass-grown path connected the church with the dwelling-house, and the overshadowing trees gave to the spot an air of protection and seclusion unknown to modern New England churches.

At one of the windows of this modest dwelling, that looked towards the setting sun, which now bathed the whole scene in yellow light, was a young woman who might have seen seventeen summers. She was slightly but well formed, and, had it not been for her fresh and radiant health, she would have possessed that pensive, poetic expression that painters love. She was not indeed beautiful, but hers was one of those countenances in which we think we recall a thousand histories, — histories of the inward life of the soul, — not the struggles of the passions; for the dove seemed visibly to rest in the deep blue liquid eye, brooding on its own secret fancies.

By the fire sat a gentleman whose countenance and gray hair showed that he was approaching the verge of threescore years and

ten, and his black dress indicated his profession. His slippers and pipe presented a picture of repose from the labors and cares of the day; and, although it had been warm, a fire of logs burned in the large old-fashioned chimney.

The furniture of the room, though plain and humble, had been kept with so much care and neatness that it was seen at once that a feminine taste had presided there, and had cherished as sacred the relics of another age.

The occupants of the room were father and daughter. A portrait over the fireplace, carefully guarded by a curtain, indicated that he was a widower, and that his child was motherless.

They had both been silent for a long time. The young lady continued to watch with apparent interest some object from the window, and the old man to enjoy his pipe; but at last the night closed in, and the autumn mist, rising from the river, veiled the brilliancy of the stars.

The daughter drew near the table, and seated herself by her father: her countenance was pensive, and a low sigh escaped her.

Her father laid his hand tenderly on her

head: "My poor child," he said, "I fear your life is too solitary; your young heart yearns for companions of your own age. True, we have few visitors suited to your age."

Edith looked up with a smile on her lips, but there was a tear in her eye, called there by her father's tender manner.

"And where," continued he, "is our young friend the student? It is long since he came to get another book. I fear he is timid and sensitive, and does not like that you should see his poor labor-swollen hands; but *that* he should be proud of, — far more proud than if they were soft, like yours."

Edith blushed slightly. "Father," she said, "I want no companion but you. Let me bring your slippers. Ah! I see Dinah has brought them while I have been gazing idly at the river. It shall not happen again. What book shall be our evening reading? Shall I take up Cicero again, or will you laugh at the Knight of the rueful Countenance."

How soon is ingenuous nature veiled or denied by woman. Edith thus tried to efface the impression of her sigh and blush, by assuming a gayety of manner which was for-

eign to her usual demeanor, and which did not deceive her father.

"We must go and find out our young friend," pursued her father. "He has much talent, and will surely distinguish himself, and he must not be suffered to languish in poverty and neglect. The first fine day, my daughter, we will ride over and visit him.

Edith looked her gratitude, and the long autumn evening wore pleasantly on.

It was at the time when slavery was common in New England. At the close of the evening, Paul and Dinah, both Africans, entered, and the usual family prayers were offered.

At the close of the prayer, the blacks kneeled down for their master's blessing.

This singular custom, though not common to the times, was sometimes practised; and those Puritans, who would not bend the knee to God except in their closets, allowed their slaves to kneel for their own blessing.

They went to Edith, who kissed Dinah on both dark cheeks, and gave her hand to Paul, and the family group separated each to his slumbers for the night.

The head of the little group we have thus described was one of the most distinguished

of the early New England clergymen. He had been educated in England, and was an excellent classical scholar; indeed, his passion for the classics was his only consolation in the obscure little parish where he was content to dwell.

He had been early left a widower, with this only child, and all the affections of a tender heart had centred in her. The mildness of his disposition had never permitted him to become either a bigot nor a persecutor. He had been all his life a diligent student of the human heart, and the result was tolerance for human inconsistencies, and indulgence for human frailties.

At this time accomplishments were unknown except to those women who were educated in the mother country; but such education as he could give his daughter had been one of his first cares.

He had taught her to read his favorite classics, and had left the mysteries of "shaping and hemming," knitting and domestic erudition, to the faithful slave Dinah. Edith had grown up, indeed, without other female influence, relying on her father's instructions, as far as they went, and her own pure instincts, to guide her.

The solitude of her situation had given to her character a pensive thoughtfulness not natural to her age or disposition. Solitude is said to be the nurse of genius, but to ripen it, at least with woman, the sunny atmosphere of love is necessary.

Genius is less of the head than of the heart: not that we belong to the modern school who believe the passions are necessary to the developement of genius; — far from it. The purest affections seem to us to have left the most enduring monuments. Among a thousand others, at least with woman, we see in Madam De Sevignè that maternal love developed all the graces of a mind unconscious certainly of its powers, but destined to become immortal.

Our heroine, for such we must try to make her, had grown up free from all artificial forms of society, but yearning for associates of her own age and sex. After her father, her affections had found objects only in birds and animals, and the poor cottagers of one of the smallest parishes in the country.

Living, as she did, in the midst of beautiful nature, and with the grandeur of the ocean always before her, it could not fail to impart a spiritual beauty, a religious elevation,

to her mind that had nothing to do with the technical distinctions of the day. Edith Grafton was formed for gentleness and love, to suffer patiently, to submit gracefully, to think more of others' than of her own happiness. She was the light and joy of her father's hearth, and the idol of her faithful slaves, and she possessed herself that "peace that goodness bosoms ever."

CHAPTER V.

" The mildest herald by our fate allotted
Beckons! and with inverted torch doth stand
To lead us, with a gentle hand,
Into the land of the departed, — into the silent land.

Ah, when the frame round which in love we cling,
Is chilled by death, does mutual service fail?
Is tender pity then of no avail?
Are intercessions of the fervent tongue
A waste of hope?" WORDSWORTH.

THE two slaves that completed the evening group had been brought into Mr. Grafton's family at the time of his marriage. Dinah was the most striking in personal appearance. She had been born a princess in her native land; and her erect and nobly-proportioned form had never been crushed by the feeling of abject slavery.

From the moment they entered the family of Mr. Grafton, they were regarded as children, even the lambs of the flock.

They were both at that time young, and soon entered into the more intimate relation of husband and wife; identifying their own

dearest interests, and making each other only subordinate to what seemed to them even more sacred, — their devotion to their master and mistress.

Dinah's mind was of a more elevated order than Paul's, her husband. If she had not been a princess in her own country, she belonged to those upon whose souls God has stamped the patent of nobility.

Naturally proud, she was docile to the instructions of her excellent mistress; and her high and imperious spirit was soon subdued to the gentle influences of domestic love, and to the purifying and elevating spirit of Christianity.

Her mistress taught her to read. The Bible was her favorite book; and she became wise in that best wisdom of the heart, which is found in an intimate knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. Her character, under the burning sun of Africa, would have been intolerable; but it was tempered to a soft moonlight radiance, by the shading of Christianity.

Though her imperious spirit at first rebelled against slavery, there was no toil, no fatigue, no menial service, however humble, which she would not have sought for those

she loved. Love elevated every toil, and gave it, in her eyes, the dignity of a voluntary and disinterested service.

She had been the only nurse of her kind mistress through her last long illness. Hers was that faithful affection that preferred long vigils at the bedside through the watches of the night, — the nurse that the sleepless eye ever found awake. Hers was that sentient sympathy that could interpret the weary look, — that love that steals into the darkened room, anticipating every wish, divining every want, and which, in silence, like the evening dew on drooping flowers, revives and soothes the sufferer.

Her cares were unavailing: her kind mistress died, commending the little Edith to her watchful love.

Dinah received her as if she had been more than the child of her own bosom. Henceforth she was the jewel of her life; and, if Mr. Grafton had not interposed, she would have treated her like those precious jewels of the old Scottish regalia, that are said to be approached by only one person at a time, and that by torch-light.

Our forefathers and foremothers had a maxim that the will of every child must be

early broken, to insure that implicit and prompt obedience that the old system of education demanded. Mr. Grafton wisely left the breaking of the little Edith's will to Dinah.

As we have seen, she was of a gentle temper, but, as a child, determined and obstinate. Obstinacy in a child is the strength of purpose which, in man and woman, leads to all excellence. Before it is guided by reason, it is mere wilfulness. It was wonderful with what a silken thread Dinah guided the little Edith.

She possessed in her own character the firmness of the oak, and an iron resolution, but tempered so finely by the influences of love and religion, that she yielded to every thing that was not hurtful; but there she stopped, and went not a hair's breadth further.

It was beautiful to see the little Edith watching the mild and loving but firm eye of Dinah, — which spoke as plain as eye could speak, — and, when it said "*No*," yielding like a young lamb to a silken tether.

Nothing is easier than to gain the prompt obedience of a young child. Gentleness, firmness, and steadiness, are all that is requi-

site. Gentleness, firmness, and steadiness, — the two last perhaps the rarest qualities in tender mothers. When a young child finds its mother uniform — not one day weakly indulgent, and the next capriciously severe, but always the same mild, firm being — she is to the child like a beneficent but unchanging Providence; and he no more expects his own will to prevail, than children of an older growth expect the sun to stand still, and the seasons to change their order, for their convenience.

As soon as the little girl was old enough, she became the pupil of her father. Under his instruction, she could read the Latin authors with facility; and even his favorite Greek classics became playfully familiar as household words, although she really knew little about them. But the Christian ethics came home more closely to her woman's heart: their tender, pure, self-denying principles were more congenial to the truly feminine nature of the little Edith.

The character and example of her mother were ever held up to her by Dinah. At night, after her little childish prayer, when she laid her head on her pillow, her last thought was of her mother.

Ah, it is not necessary to be a Catholic, to believe in the intercession of saints. To a tender heart, a mother lost in infancy is the beautiful Madonna of the church; and the heart turns as instinctively to her as the devout Catholic turns to the holy mother and child.

In all Edith's solitary rambles, her pensive thoughts sought her mother. There was a particular spot in the evening sky where she fancied the spirit of her mother to dwell; and there, in all her childish griefs, she sought sympathy, and turned her eye towards it in childlike devotion.

CHAPTER VI.

Where now the solemn shade,
  Verdure and gloom, where many branches meet;
So grateful, when the noon of summer made
  The valleys sick with heat?

Let in through all the trees,
  Come the strange rays; the forest depths are bright:
Their sunny-colored foliage, in the breeze,
  Twinkles like beams of light. BRYANT.

A FEW days after the evening before mentioned, Edith and her father prepared for their little journey, to visit the young student.

It was a brilliant morning in the very last of October. All journeys, at this time, were made on horseback: they were mounted, therefore, Mr. Grafton on a sedate old beast, that had served him many years, and Edith on the *petite fille* of this venerable "ancestress,"— gentle, but scarcely out of its state of coltship.

The Indians, at this time, were much feared, and the shortest excursions were never undertaken without fire-arms. Paul, as well as Mr. Grafton, was well armed, and served them as a guard.

As soon as they had left their own village, their course was only a bridle-path through the forest; and the path was now so hidden with the fallen leaves, that it was sometimes indicated only by marks on the trees. The trees were almost stripped of their foliage, and the bright autumn sun, shining through the bare trunks, sparkled on the dew of the fallen leaves. It was the last smile of autumn. The cold had already commenced. No sound broke the intense stillness of the forest but the trampling of their horses' feet as they crushed the dry, withered foliage.

The sky was intensely blue, and without a cloud. The elasticity of the air excited the young spirits of Edith. She was gay, and, like a young fawn, she fluttered around her father, sometimes galloping her rough little pony in front, and then returning, she would give a gentle cut with her whip to her father's horse, who, with head down, and plodding indifference, regarded it no more than he did a fly.

Mr. Grafton, delighted with his daughter's playfulness, looked at her with a quiet, tender smile: her gayety, to him, was like the play of her infancy, and he delighted to think that she was yet young and happy.

Edith had ridden forward, and they had lost sight of her, when she came galloping back, pale as death, and hardly able to retain her seat from terror.

"Edith, my child," said her father, "what has happened?"

She could only point with her finger to a thin column of blue smoke that curled above the trees. Mr. Grafton knew that it indicated the presence of Indians, at this time the terror of all the inhabitants.

"No doubt they are friendly, my dear child," said Mr. Grafton; and he sent Paul, who was armed, forward to reconnoitre.

Paul soon returned, showing his white teeth from ear to ear.

"The piccaninnies," he said.

Mr. Grafton and Edith rode forward, and in a little hollow at the foot of a rock, from which bubbled a clear spring, a young Indian woman, with a pappoose at her feet, was half reclining; another child, attached in its birch cradle to the pendent branch of an elm tree, was gently rocked by the wind. A fire was built against the rock, and venison suspended before it to roast.

It was a beautiful little domestic scene, and Mr. Grafton and Edith stopped to contemplate

it. They soon learned that the husband of the Indian was in the forest; but he was friendly, and, after exchanging smiles, Edith dismounted.

She sat on the grass, caressing the young pappoose, and talked with the mother in that untaught, mute language that young and kind hearts so easily understand.

This little adventure delayed them so long that it was past noon when they reached the secluded farmhouse we have described in the first chapter of our little tale.

The old man was sitting at the door, enjoying the kindly warmth of the declining sun. Seymore was not far off, at work in his laborer's frock. A vivid blush of surprise, and pleasure, and shame, covered his temples and noble brow, as he came forward to meet them.

Edith, quick in her perceptions, understood his feelings, and turned aside her head while he drew off his laborer's frock. This gave an appearance of embarrassment to her first greeting, and the vivid delight faded in a moment from his brilliant countenance, and a melancholy shade passed over it.

They entered the house, and Edith endeavored to remove the pain she had given, by more marked attention to Seymore; but

simple and sincere, ignorant as she was of all arts of coquetry, it only increased the bashfulness of her manner.

The family had already dined; but, after some delay, a repast was prepared for the travellers; and, before they were ready to depart, the long shadows of the opposite hills brought an early twilight over the little valley.

Mr. Grafton looked at his daughter; he could not expose her to a dark ride through the forest; and the pressing invitation of the good old people, that they should stay the night, was accepted.

After much pleasant talk with the enthusiastic young student, to which Edith listened with deep interest, Mr. Grafton was tasked to his utmost polemical and theological knowledge by the searching questions of the old Puritan. Like douce Davie Deans, he was stiff in his doctrines, and would not allow a suspicion of wavering from the orthodox standard of faith. But Edith soon gave undeniable evidence that sleep was a much better solacer of fatigue than theological discussions; and, after the evening worship had been scrupulously performed, a bed was prepared for Mr. Grafton on the floor of

the room where they sat, for he would not allow the old people to give up theirs to him.

Seymore gayly resigned his poor garret to Edith, and slept, as he had often done before, in the hayloft. Slept? no; he lay awake all night thinking how lovely Edith looked in her riding *Joseph*,* which fitted closely to her beautiful shape, and a beaver hat tied under the chin, to confine her hair in riding. She was the angel of his dreams. But why did she turn aside when they met? and the poor student sighed.

Edith looked around the little garret with much interest, and some little awe. There were the favorite books, heaps of manuscripts, and every familiar object that was so closely associated with Seymore. Nothing reveals so much of another's mind and habits, as to go into the apartment where they habitually live.

The bed had been neatly made with snowy sheets, and some little order given to the room. Edith opened the books, and read the marked passages; the manuscripts were all open, and with the curiosity of our mother

* We have in vain endeavored to find the etymology of this name. It might first have been of many colors, and named from the coat of the patriarch's favorite son.

Eve, she read a few lines. She colored to the very temples as she committed this fault; but she found herself irresistibly led on by sympathy with a mind kindred to her own; and when she laid her head on the pillow, tears of admiration and pity filled her eyes. She lay awake, forming plans for the student's advancement; and, before sleep weighed down her eyelids, she had woven a fair romance, of which he was the hero.

Ah, that youth could be mistress of the ring and the lamp! then would all the world be prosperous and happy. But wisdom and experience, the true genii, appear in the form of an *aged* magician, who has forgotten the beatings of that precious thing, the human heart.

The next morning, when they were assembled at their frugal breakfast, Seymore said, "I fear you thought, from the frequent ink-spots on my little garret, that, like Luther, I had thrown my ink-bottle at the devil whenever he appeared."

"I hope," said Edith, "you have not thrown away all its contents; for I had some charming fancies last night, inspired, I believe, by that very ink-bottle."

Seymore blushed; but he did not look displeased, and Edith was satisfied.

The next morning was clear and balmy, and, soon after breakfast, they mounted their horses for their return.

There are few things more exhilarating than riding through woods on a clear autumnal morning; but Edith felt no longer the wild gayety of the previous morning. With a thoughtful countenance, she rode silently by her father's side when the path would permit, or followed quietly when it was too narrow.

"You seem to have found food for thought in the student's garret, my dear," said her father.

Edith blushed slightly, but did not answer.

They had accomplished about half their journey, when Mr. Grafton proposed turning off from the direct path to visit an old lady, — a friend of Edith's mother, an emigrant of a noble family from the mother country.

Edith followed silently, wondering she had never heard her father mention this friend of her mother before.

They soon after emerged from the forest upon open fields, cleared and cultivated with unusual care. A beautiful brook ran winding in the midst, and the whole domain was enclosed in strong fences of stone. About

midway was built a low, irregular, but very large farmhouse. It consisted of smaller buildings, connected by very strong palisades; and the whole was enclosed, at some distance, by a fence built of strong timbers. It was evidently a dwelling designed for defence against Indians. They entered the enclosure by an iron gate, so highly wrought and finished that it must have been imported from the mother country.

Edith found herself in a large garden, that had once been cultivated with much care and expense. It had been filled with rose-bushes, honeysuckles, and choice English flowers; but all was now in a state of neglect and decay. The walks were overrun with weeds, the arbors in ruins, and the tendrils of the vines wandering at their own wanton will. It seemed as if neglect had aided the autumn frost to cover this favorite spot with the garb of mourning.

There was no front entrance to this singular building; and the visitors rode round to a low door at the back, partly concealed by a pent roof. After knocking several minutes, it was opened by a very old negro, dressed in a tarnished livery, with his woolly hair drawn out into a queue, and powdered. He smiled a wel-

come, and, with much show of respect, led them through many dark passages to a low but very comfortable room. The walls were hung with faded tapestry; and the low ceiling, crossed with heavy beams, would have made the apartment gloomy, but for two large windows that looked into the sunny garden. The sashes were of small, lozenge panes of glass set in lead; while the bright autumn sun streamed through, and shone with cheerful light on the black oak furniture, and showed every mote dancing in its beams.

Edith looked around with surprise and delight. A lady not much past the meridian of life came forward to greet them. She was dressed in an olive-colored brocade, with a snowy lawn apron and neckerchief folded across her breast. The sleeve reached just below the elbow, and was finished with a ruffle, and black silk mitts met the ruffle at the elbow. A rich lace shaded her face, and a small black velvet hood was tied closely under the chin.

The lady's manner was rather stately and formal, as she greeted Mr. Grafton with all the ceremony of the old school of politeness, and looked at his daughter.

"She is the image of her mother," said Lady C——.

"She is a precious flower," answered Mr. Grafton, looking at Edith with pride and affection, as she stood, half respectful, half bashful, before the lady.

"You have called her Mary, I hope, — her mother's name."

"No," answered Mr. Grafton; "I have but *one* Mary," — and he looked upwards.

Edith pressed closer to her father. "Call me Edith, madam," she said, with a timid smile.

Lady C—— smiled also, and was soon in earnest conversation with Mr. Grafton.

Edith was engaged in examining a room so much more elegant than any she had seen before. Her eyes were soon attracted by a full-length portrait on the opposite side of the apartment. It was a lady in the bloom of youth, dressed in the costume of the second Charles. It was evidently an exquisite work of art. To Edith, the somewhat startling exposure of the bust, which the fashion of the period demanded, was redeemed by the chaste and nunlike expression of the face. Tender blue eyes were cast down on a wounded dove that she cherished in her

bosom; and the long, dark eyelash shaded a pale and pensive cheek.

Edith was fascinated by this beautiful picture. Who was she? where did she live? what was her fate? were questions hovering on her lips, which she dared not ask of the stately lady on the couch; but, as she stood riveted before it, "O that I had such a friend!" passed through her mind; and, like inexperienced and enthusiastic youth, she thought how fondly she could have loved her, and, if it were necessary, have sacrificed her own life for hers.

Lady C—— observed her fixed attention. "That is a portrait of the Lady Ursula," she said, "who built this house, and brought over from England the fruits and flowers of the garden. Alas! they are now much wasted and destroyed."

At this moment, the old negro appeared, to say that the dinner was served.

They passed into another low room, in the centre of which was a long oaken dining-table, the upper end raised two steps higher than the lower, and the whole was fixed to the floor. At this time, the upper end only was covered with a rich damask cloth, where the lady and her guests took their seats; the other half of the table extending bare beneath them.

"In this chair, and at this table, the Lady Ursula was wont to dine with her maidens and serving-men," said Lady C——, as she took her seat in a high-backed, richly-carved chair of oak; "and I have retained the custom, though my serving-men are much reduced;" and she glanced her eye on the trembling old negro.

Edith thought how dreary it must be to dine there in solitary state, with no one to speak to except the old negro, and she cast a pitying look around the apartment.

A beauffet was in one corner, well filled with massive plate, and the walls were adorned with pictures in needle-work, framed in dark ebony.

The picture opposite Edith was much faded and defaced, but it was meant to represent Abraham offering his son Isaac in sacrifice.

"It was the work of the Lady Ursula's fingers," said Lady C——, "as every thing else you see here was created by her."

"Is she now living?" asked Edith, very innocently.

"Alas! no, my dear; hers was a sad fate; but her story is too long for the dining hour;" and as dinner was soon over, they returned to the other apartment.

Edith longed for a ramble in the garden. When she returned, the horses were at the door, and she took a reluctant leave, for she had not heard the story of the Lady Ursula.

As soon as they had turned their horses' heads outside the iron gate, Edith began her eager questions:

"Who was that beautiful woman, the original of the portrait? Where did she live? How did she die? What was her fate?" Her father smiled, and related the following particulars, which deserve another chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

"Loveliest of lovely things are they
On earth, that soonest pass away.
Even love, long tried, and cherished long,
Becomes more tender, and more strong,
At thought of that insatiate grave
From which its yearnings cannot save.

"But where is she, who, at this calm hour,
Watched his coming to see?
She is not at the door, nor yet in the bower:
He calls, — but he only hears on the flower
The hum of the laden bee." BRYANT.

"THE Lady Ursula was the daughter of an English nobleman, the proprietor of Grondale Abbey. She was betrothed, in early life, to a young man, an officer in the army. As she was an only daughter, and inherited from her mother a large fortune, her father disapproved of her choice, and wished her to ally herself with the heir of a noble family. He was rejoiced, therefore, when a war broke out, that obliged Col. Fowler to leave the country with his regiment, to join the army.

"The parting of the lovers was painful, but they parted, as the young do, full of hope,

and agreed to keep up a very frequent correspondence.

"For a year, his letters cheered his faithful mistress; but then they ceased, and a report of his death in battle reached her. Her father then urged the other alliance. This the Lady Ursula steadily refused; and she was soon after relieved from all importunity, by the death of her father.

"She was an only daughter, but her father left several sons. His estate belonged to the eldest, by entail, and the younger brothers, having obtained large grants of land in this country, determined to emigrate to the new world.

"The Lady Ursula, disappointed of all her cherished hopes, after much reflection, decided to accompany them, and become an actual settler in the wilderness.

"She purchased a large farm on this beautiful part of the coast, and as she was much beloved by her dependents, she persuaded a large number to unite their fortunes with hers. She brought out twenty serving-men, and several young maidens, and created a little paradise around her. The garden was filled with every variety of fruit and flower then cultivated in England, and the strong

fence around the whole was to protect her from the Indians.

"At the time the Lady Ursula came to this country, she very much resembled the beautiful portrait that has charmed you so much. It was painted after she parted from her lover, and was intended as a present for him, had she not soon after heard of his death."

"You have seen her, then, my dear father," said Edith. "You knew the beautiful original of that lovely portrait."

"I scarcely knew her," said Mr. Grafton. "Soon after I came to this country, I was riding, one day, near a part of her estate. The day was warm and sultry: under some large spreading oaks a cloth was laid for a repast. I stopped to refresh my horse, and soon after I saw the lady approach, drawn in a low carriage.

"She had brought her workmen their dinner, and after it was spread on the grass, she turned her beautiful eyes towards heaven, and asked a blessing. She then left her men to enjoy their food, and returned as she came, driving herself in a small poney chaise.

"Among the maidens who came over with her from England was one who had received a superior education, and was much

in her lady's confidence. This young girl was often the companion of her lady's solitary walks about her estate. One evening they were walking, and the Lady Ursula was relating the circumstances of her early life, and said that till this time she had never parted with all hope; she had cherished unconsciously a feeling that her betrothed lover might have been a captive, and that he would at length return. The young girl said, 'Why do you despair now, my lady? that is a long lane that has no turning.' The lady smiled more cheerfully. 'My bird,' she said, 'you have given me a name for my estate. In memory of this conversation, it shall be called *Long Lane;*' and it has always retained that name.

"The dews were falling, and they returned to the house. Her men and maidens were soon assembled, and the Lady Ursula herself led the evening devotions. They were scarcely ended, when a loud knocking was heard at the gate. It could not be Indians! No; it was a packet from England; and, O joy unspeakable! there was a letter from her long-lost friend and lover. He had been taken prisoner when half dead on the field of battle, had been removed from one place

of confinement to another, debarred the privilege of writing, and had heard nothing from her. But the war was ended, there had been an exchange of prisoners, and he hastened to England, trembling with undefined fears and joyful anticipations. He would embark immediately, and follow his mistress to the new world, where he hoped to receive the reward of all his constancy.

"The lady could not finish the letter: surprise, joy, ecstasy, — all were too much for her, and the Lady Ursula fainted. As soon as she recovered, all was bustle and excitement through the house. The lady could not sleep that night, and she began immediately to prepare for the arrival of her lover. He said he should embark in a few days; she might therefore expect him every hour.

"Every room in the house was ornamented with fresh flowers. A room was prepared for her beloved guest, filled with every luxury the house could furnish; and her own portrait was placed there.

"She was not selfish in her joy: she told her men to get in the harvest; for when *he* arrived, no work should be performed; there should be a jubilee. A fatted calf was selected, to be roasted whole; and every one of

her large household was presented with a new suit of clothes. 'For this my *friend*,' she said, 'was lost, and is now found; was dead, and is alive again.'

"When all was ready, the Lady Ursula could not disguise her impatience. She wandered restlessly from place to place, her eye brilliant, and her cheek glowing. At every sound she started, trembled, and turned pale.

"Her men were at work in a distant field; and she determined again, as usual when they were far from home, to carry them their dinner. When she took her seat in the little carriage, she said, 'It is the last time, I hope, that I shall go alone.'

"The repast was spread, and they all stood around for the blessing from the lips of the lady. It was remarked by her men that she had never looked so beautiful: happiness beamed from her eyes, and her usually pale cheek was flushed with joy. She folded her hands, and her meek eyes were raised. At that moment, a savage yell was heard; an Indian sprung from the thicket. With one blow of his tomahawk the Lady Ursula was leveled to the ground, and, in less than a moment, her long, fair hair was hanging at

his girdle. The Indian was followed by others; and all but one of her faithful servants shared the fate of their mistress."

Mr. Grafton paused; Edith's tears were falling fast. "What became of her lover?" she said, as soon as she could speak.

"He arrived a few days after, to behold the wreck of all his hopes, and returned again, heart-broken, to England."

"And the picture," said Edith; "why did he not claim it, and take it with him, to console him, as far as it could, for the loss of his beautiful bride?"

"As she had made no will," said Mr. Grafton, "all the Lady Ursula's estate belonged to her own family. The lady we have visited to-day is a daughter of her brother."

Edith continued silent, and heeded not that the shades of evening gathered around them. She was pondering the fate of the Lady Ursula. That one so young, so beautiful, so good, should lead a life of sorrow and disappointment, and meet with so sudden and dreadful a death, weighed on her spirits; for Edith had not yet solved the mystery of life.

The sun had long set, when they reached their own door. Dinah had prepared the evening meal, and the cheerful evening fire; and Edith smiled her thanks.

As she helped her young mistress to undress, she said, "How pale you are, and how tired! You need a sweet, refreshing sleep to rest you again."

When Edith laid her head on the pillow, she called her humble friend to her: "Ah, Dinah," she said, "I have heard a story that makes me think there is no happiness on this earth."

Dinah had heard the story of the Lady Ursula.

"Was it not too sad, that she should meet that dreadful fate just as her lover returned, and she was going to be so happy?"

Dinah thought it was very sad. "But the lady was pure and good: the words of prayer were on her lips, and she went straight to heaven without much pain. Had she married and gone to England, she might have become vain and worldly; she might have lost the heavenly purity of her character."

"Yes," said Edith; "and Col. Fowler, having lived so long in the army, might not have loved her as well as she thought he did. Ah, who could live without love?"

Dinah thought many could and did. "Women depended too much," she said, "on their affections for happiness. Strong and deep affections were almost always dis-

appointed; and, if not, death must come and sever the dearest ties;" and she stooped down and kissed Edith's hand, which she held in hers.

Poor Dinah! she little knew how entirely her own heart was bound up in Edith.

"But what can we live for, if not for love?" said Edith.

"For many things," answered Dinah, in her simple and quiet manner; "to grow better ourselves, and to do good to others; to make sacrifices, and to love *all* good works."

"I should not wish to live, were I to lose my father, and you, and"—Edith paused, and closed her eyes.

Dinah drew the curtain, and bid her, softly, "good night."

Edith could not sleep. She was reflecting on the fate of the Lady Ursula. With Dinah's assistance, she had begun to solve the mysteries of Providence;*

> "Without forsaking a too earnest world,
> To calm the affections, elevate the soul,
> And consecrate her life to truth and love."

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* The story of the Lady Ursula is founded on fact. In the author's youth, the farm of "Long Lane" retained its name, and belonged to the C—— family.

CHAPTER VIII.

"A little cottage built of sticks and weeds,
In homely wise, and walled with sods around,
In which a witch did dwell, in loathly weedes
And wilful want, all careless of her needes;
So choosing solitairie to abide. Far from all neighbours."

SPENSER.

I WISH I were a painter, or a poet, to describe a little sheltered nook on the sea-shore, where devotion would retire to worship, love to dwell in thought on the beloved, or sorrow to be soothed to rest. It was a small cove, sheltered on the north by high, overhanging cliffs, that ran out into the ocean in a bold headland. Opposite these rocks the land sloped gently down, and the ocean, lulled to rest, came in like a spent and wearied child, and rippled on a smooth, white sand.

The top of the cliff was covered with many-colored shrubbery. The drooping branches of the birch, the sumac, and the aspen, tinted with the rich coloring of autumn, hung half way down the cliff, and were reflected, like a double landscape, in the water.

At sunset, the entire glassy surface was burnished with the red and yellow rays of the setting sun ; and when the young moon, like a fairy boat, just rested on the surface, it was a scene of beauty that could not be surpassed in any country.

Immediately under the cliff, and sheltered like a swallow's nest, was the smallest of human habitations; so dark, and old, and moss-grown, that it seemed a part of the rock against which it rested. It consisted of one room: a door and single pane of glass admitted the light, and the nets hanging around, and an old boat drawn up on the beach, indicated that it was the shelter of a fisherman.

The Indian summer still continued, and a few mornings after the little journey, Edith was induced, by the soft beauty of the weather, to visit the cove. It was a walk of two miles, but the inhabitants of the cottage were among the poor of her father's parish, and she was never a stranger in their cottages.

The brilliant sun gave to the ever-changing ocean the tints of emerald green, royal purple, crimson, and sapphire, and made a path of light, fit for angels' footsteps. The tide was out, and the smooth beach glittered

in the morning sun. The ocean, as far as the eye could reach, was smooth as glass. It was not then, as now, white with the frequent sail: a solitary vessel was then a rare occurrence, and hailed with rapture, as bringing news from *home*. The white-winged curlew was wheeling around in perfect security, and the little bay was dotted, in a few spots, with fishermen's boats. The absence of the old boat from the beach showed that the owner of the cottage was among them.

Edith was sorry her friend the fisherman was absent, for the old woman who kept his house was a virago; and, indeed, was sometimes thought insane. Although Edith's moral courage was great, she possessed that physical timidity and sensitiveness to outward impressions that belongs to the poetic temperament.

She lingered in her walk, watching the curlews, and listening to the measured booming of the waves as they touched the shore and then receded. The obvious reflection that comes to every mind perhaps came to hers, that thus succeed and are scattered the successive generations of men. No; she was thinking that thus arrive and depart the days

of her solitary existence; thus uniformly, and thus leaving no trace behind. Will it be always thus? she sighed; and her eyes filled with tears. Her revery was interrupted by a rough voice behind her.

"What have you done, that God should grant you the happiness to weep?" said the old woman, who now stood at her side.

Edith was startled, for the woman's expression was very wild, but she answered mildly, "Is that so great a boon, mother, that I should deserve to lose it?"

"Ask her," she said, "whose brain is burning, and whose heart is like lead, what she would give for one moist tear. O God! I cannot weep."

Whatever timidity Edith felt when she first saw the malignant expression of the old woman's countenance, was now lost in pity. She knew that the poor creature's reason was impaired, and she thought this might be one of her wild moments.

She laid her hand gently on her arm, and said, with a smile, "Nanny, I have come on purpose to visit you. Let us go into the house, and you shall tell me what you think, and all you want to make you comfortable for the winter."

Nanny looked at Edith almost with scorn. "Tell you what I think!" she said. "As well might I tell yonder birds that are hovering with white wings in the blue sky. What do you know of sorrow? but you will not always be strangers. Sorrow is coming over you; I see its dark fold drawing nearer and nearer."

A slight shudder came over Edith, but she smiled, and said, soothingly, "I came to talk with you about yourself; let my fate alone for the present."

"Ah! no need to shake the glass," answered Nanny; "grief is coming soon enough to drink up your young blood. The cheek that changes like yours, with sudden flushing, withers soonest; not with age, no, not, like mine, with age, but blighted by the cold hand of unkindness; and eyes, like yours, that every emotion fills with sudden tears, soon have their fountains dry, and then, ah! how you will long and pray for one drop, as I do now!"

They had entered the poor hovel, and the old woman, who had been speaking in a tone of great excitement, now turned and looked full at Edith: her beauty seemed to awake a feeling of envious contempt.

The contrast between them was indeed great. Edith stood in the narrow door, blooming with youth and health. Her dark hair, which contrasted so beautifully with her soft blue eye, had lost its curl by the damp air, and she had taken off her bonnet to put back the uncurled tresses.

The old woman had seated herself in an old, high-backed chair, and, with her elbows on her knees, looked earnestly at Edith. Her face might once have been fair; but it was now deeply wrinkled, and bronzed with smoke and exposure. Her teeth were gone, and her thin, shriveled lips had an expression of pain and suffering; while her eyes betrayed the envy and contempt she seemed to feel towards others.

"Ah," she said, "gather up your beautiful shining locks. How long, think you, before they will be like mine? But mine were once black and glossy as yours; and now look at them."

She took down from under her cap her long, gray hair, and spread it over her breast. It was dry and coarse, and without a single black hair. She laid her dark, bony hand on Edith's white arm.

"Sorrow has done this," she said, — "not

time: it has been of this color for fifty years."

"And have you then suffered so much?" said Edith, — and her eyes filled with tears.

The old woman saw that she was pitied, and a more gentle expression came into her eyes, as she fixed them on Edith.

"My child," she said, "we can learn to bear sorrow, bereavement, the death of all that are twined with our own souls, old age, solitude, — all but remorse — *all but remorse;*" and the last word was pronounced almost in a whisper.

"And cannot you turn to God?" said Edith; "cannot you pray? God has invited all who are sinners to come to him."

She stopped; for she felt her own insufficiency to administer religious consolation.

"And who told you I was so great a sinner?" said the old woman, all her fierceness returning immediately.

Edith had felt herself all the comfort of opening her heart in prayer to God; but she was abashed by the old woman: she said only timidly and humbly, "Why will you not confide in my father? Tell him your wants and your misery, and he will pray for you, and help you."

"Tell him! and what does he know of the heart-broken? Can he lift the leaden covering from the conscience? Can he give me back the innocence and peace of my cottage home in the green lanes of England, or the blessing of my poor old father?" And, while an expression of the deepest sadness passed over her face, — "Can he bring back my children, my beautiful boys, or bid the sea give up its dead? No, no; let him preach and pray, and let these poor ignorant people hear him; and let me, — ah, let me lie down in the green earth."

Edith was shocked; and the tears she tried in vain to suppress forced themselves down her cheeks.

"Poor child!" said the old woman; "you can weep for others, but yours is the fate of all the daughters of Eve: you will soon weep for yourself. With all your proud beauty and your feeling heart, you cannot keep your idols: they will crumble away, and you will come at last to what I am."

Edith tried to direct her attention to something else. She looked around the cottage, which had not the appearance of the most abject poverty. The few articles of furniture were neat, and in one corner stood a comfort-

able-looking bed. A peat fire slumbered on the hearth, and many dried and smoked fish were hanging from the beams.

She said, very mildly, "I came, Nanny, to see if you did not want something to make you comfortable for the winter. My father sent me, and you must tell me all you want."

"I want nothing," said the old woman; "at least for myself. All your blankets cannot keep the cold from the heart."

At this moment, a little girl about five years old came running into the cottage, with a basket of blackberries she had been picking on the cliffs above the house. Edith was well known to her, as she was to all the children of the parish. The little girl went up to her and presented the blackberries, and then ran to her grandmother with the air of a favored child, as if she were sure of a welcome.

An expression that Edith had never seen, a softened expression of deep tenderness, came over the face of the old woman.

"I was going to speak of this child," she said. "I feel that I shall soon be *there*," — and she pointed towards the earth, — "and this child has no friend but me."

The little girl, meantime, had crept close

to the old woman, and laid her head on her shoulder. The child was not attractive: her feet and legs were bare, and her dress was ragged and much soiled; but covering her eyes and forehead was a profusion of golden-colored ringlets; and, where her skin was not grimmed with dirt and exposure to the sea air, it was delicately white.

There was something touching in the affection of the poor orphan for the old woman; and the contrast, as they thus leant on each other, would have arrested the eye of a painter.

Edith promised to be a friend to her grandchild, and then entreated Nanny to see her father, and confide her sorrows to him. This she steadily refused; and Edith left her, her young spirits saddened by the mystery and the grief that she could not understand. As she walked home, she thought how little the temper of the old woman was in harmony with the external beauty that environed her. The beauty was marred by sin and grief. And even in her own life, pure as it was, how little was there to harmonize with the exquisite loveliness around her!

Edith was not happy: the inward pulse did not beat in harmony with the pulse of

nature. She was not happy, because woman, especially in youth, is happy only in her affections. She felt within herself an infinite capacity of loving, and she had few to love. Her heart was solitary. Her affection for her father partook too much of respect and awe; and that for Dinah had grown up from her infancy, and was as much a matter of habit as of gratitude. She longed for the love of an equal, or rather of some one she could reverence as well as love. How she wished she could have been the companion of the Lady Ursula!

Edith was beginning to feel that she had a soul of infinite longings; but she had not yet learnt its power to create for itself an infinite and immortal happiness; and the beauty of nature, that excited without filling her mind, only increased her loneliness.

It is after other pursuits and other friends have disappointed us, that we go back to the beautiful teachings of nature; and, like a tender mother, she receives us to her bosom.

> "O, nature never did betray
> The heart that loved her."

She alone is unchangeable. We may confide in her promises. I have planted an acorn by a beloved grave: in a few years

I returned, and found a beautiful oak overshadowing it.

Nature is liberal and impartial as she is faithful. The green earth offers a home for the eyes of the poorest beggar; the soft and purifying winds visit all equally; the tenderly majestic stars look down on him who rests in a bed of down, and on him whose pallet is the naked earth; and the blue sky embraces equally the child of sorrow and of joy.

The teachings of nature are open to all. The poor heart-broken mother sees, in the parent leaves that enfold the tender heart of the young plant, and in the bird that strips her own breast of its down to shelter her young from the night air, the same instinct that teaches her to cherish the child of sorrow. He who addressed the poor and illiterate drew his illustrations from nature: the lily of the field, the fowls of the air, and the young ravens, he made his teachers to those who, like him, lived in the open air, and were peculiarly susceptible to all the influences of nature.

To return from this digression. Perhaps my readers will wish to know more of poor Nanny, as she was called.

Nothing was known of her early history,

She had come from the mother country four years before, with this little child, then an infant, and had taken a lodging in the poor fisherman's hut. She said the little girl was her grandchild, and all her affections were centred in her. She was entirely reserved as to her previous history, and was irritated if any curiosity was expressed about it, though she sometimes gave out hints that she had been an accomplice and victim of some deed for which she felt remorse. As she was quite harmless, and the inhabitants were much scattered, she was unmolested, and earned a scanty living by picking berries, fishing, and helping those who were not quite as poor as herself. Edith visited her often, and Mr. Grafton, though she would not acknowledge him as a spiritual guide, ministered to all her temporal wants.

CHAPTER IX.

Thou changest not, but I am changed,
Since first thy pleasant banks I ranged;
The visions of my youth are past,
Too bright, too beautiful, to last. BRYANT.

MORE than two years had passed since Edith's visit to the old woman of the cliff. Changes had taken place in all the personages of my little tale; but in Edith they were most apparent. She who had sung all day as the birds sing, because she could not help it, at nineteen had learned to reflect and to analyze; a sensitive conscience had taken the place of spontaneous and impulsive virtue; and the same heart that could be happy all day long in nursing a young chicken, or watching the opening of a flower, or carrying food to a poor old woman, now closed her days with *thinking*, and moistened her pillow with unbidden tears.

It is the natural course of womanhood. Ah! that we could always be children. We have seen that after Edith had learned the

story of the Lady Ursula, she began to solve some of the mysteries of life. She had since turned over many of its leaves, all fair with innocence and truth, but she had not yet found an answer to the question, "Why do we suffer?"

The change that had taken place in young Seymore was deeper and sterner, but not so apparent. Externally, he was the same beautiful youth that he was when we introduced him to our kind readers, in his attic.

Since then, he had had much to struggle with; but poverty had not been his greatest temptation. He could not indeed hope to be exempt from the bitter experience of almost all who at that time were scholars.

To this very day, the sons of clergymen, and many of the most distinguished men in New England, have held the plough in the intervals of their preparation for the university. How many poor mothers have striven, and labored, and denied themselves all but the bare necessaries of life, that their sons might gain that sole distinction in New England, — an education at one of the colleges.

Poverty was not his greatest trial. When he first saw Edith, her timid and innocent beauty had made an impression on his fancy,

that all his subsequent dreams in solitude, and his lonely reveries, had only served to deepen. She seemed to embody all his imaginations of female loveliness. He had, indeed, never before seen a beautiful girl, and he had no acquaintance with women, except his grandmother.

The remembrance of his mother came softened to him, like something unconnected with earth; and when he thought of the darkened chamber, the pale, faint smile, her hand on his head, and her solemn consecration of him to the church, on her death-bed, he felt a sensation of awe that chilled and appalled him.

After his acquaintance with Edith and her father, life wore a brighter hue. His efforts to gain an education to distinguish himself were redoubled. Mr. Grafton aided in every way; and with the sympathy of his kind friend came the image of his beautiful daughter. His labors were lightened, his heart cheered, by the thought that she would smile and approve.

Thus days of bodily labor were succeeded by nights of study; and, for some time, with his youth and vigorous health, this was hardly felt as an evil. But we have seen, in our

first chapter, that he had moments of despondency, and of late they had been of more frequent occurrence.

At such times, the remembrance of his mother, and her solemn dedication of him to the church, came back with redoubled power, and the time he had spent in lighter literature, in poetry, and even his dreams of Edith, seemed to him like sins. A darker and less joyous spirit was gradually overshadowing him. A morbid sensitiveness to moral evil, an exaggerated sense of his own sins, and of the strict requisitions of the spirit of the times, clouded his natural gayety.

His visits to the parsonage, indeed, always dissipated his fears for a little time. Edith received him as a valued friend, and he returned to his studies, cheered by her smiles, and sustained by new hopes.

He never analyzed the cause of this change, or the nature of his feelings; but, when he thought of his degree at the college, it was her sympathy and her approbation that came first to his mind; and, when he sent his thoughts forward to a settlement and a parsonage like that of his venerable friend's, it would have been empty, and desolate, and uninhabitable, if Edith had not been there.

It was in Edith's beloved father that a year had made the saddest change. The winter had been unusually severe, and the snow deep. His parish was much scattered, and it was his custom to visit them on horseback; and, in the deepest snows, and most severe storms, he had never refused to appear at their bedsides, or to visit and comfort the afflicted. He had lived, and labored, and loved among his simple flock, but he now felt that his ministry was drawing towards a close.

In March, he had returned from one of his visits late at night, and much wet and fatigued. The next morning he found himself ill with a lung fever. It left him debilitated, and much impaired in constitution; and a rapid decline seemed the almost inevitable consequence at his advanced age.

CHAPTER X.

Pride,
Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness; and he who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he has never used.
O, be wiser, then!
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love:
True dignity abides with him alone,
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of heart. WORDSWORTH.

IT has been the fashion, of late, to depreciate the clergymen among our Puritan fathers. It is true they erred, but their errors belonged to the time and the circumstance that placed in their hands unusual power. There were among them men that would have done honor to any age; perfect gentlemen, who would have adorned a drawing-room, as well as consecrated a church.

The traits that constitute *gentlesse* do not belong to any age or any school: they are not formed by the conventions of society, nor the forms that are adopted to facilitate and

give grace to the intercourse of equals. The precept that says, "In honor preferring one another," if acted on in perfect sincerity of heart, and carried out in all the intercourse of society, would form perfect gentlemen and ladies. We have heard Jesus called the most finished gentleman that ever lived. Undisguised benevolence, humility, and sincerity, would form such gentlemen, and the intercourse of society, founded on such principles, would be true, noble, graceful, and most attractive.

Such a gentleman was Edith's father; and while he was an honored and cherished guest at the tables of the fathers and princes of the colony, he seldom left his humble parish. His influence there was unbounded, and his peculiarities, if he had them, belonged to the age. In an age of persecutors, he was so averse to persecution, that he did not escape the charge of heresy and insincerity.

The clergy of that time loved to preach from the Old Testament, and to illustrate the lives of the patriarchs. An unlimited and implicit faith, that made each believe he was the especial care and favorite of God, was the foundation of the religion of the Old Testament. Our fathers had much of the

same persuasion. To an audience of fishermen, and scattered cultivators of the sterile fields of New England, such a faith came home to their hearts; the one committing their frail boats to the treacherous ocean, the other depending on the early and the latter rains, and genial skies, for their support.

June had come, the genial month of June, and Mr. Grafton was not revived by its soft air. He declined daily, and Edith, his tender nurse, could not conceal from herself that there was little hope of his ever reviving.

Dinah had watched with him almost every night, but, worn out with fatigue, Edith had persuaded her to take some moments for repose. After a night of much restlessness, towards morning, her father fell into a tranquil slumber. Edith was alone in the darkened room, and as she sat in the deep silence by his bedside, an old-fashioned clock, that stood in the corner, seemed, to her excited nerves, to strike its monotonous tick directly on her temples. A small taper was burning in the chimney, and the long shadows it cast served only to darken the room. From time to time, as Edith leaned over her father, she touched his forehead with her hand: in the solitude and stillness, it seemed a medium of

communication with the mind of her father, and held the place of language.

At length he opened his eyes, and seeing her bending over him, he drew her towards him, and kissed her tenderly. In a whisper, he said, "I feel, my child, that I am dying."

"Do not weep," said he, observing how much Edith was shocked; "you can trust in God. You can be near me in death, as you have been in life. Now is the time, my Edith, to feel the value of all those principles we have learned together through life. I feel that God is near us, and that when I am gone, he will be near to you."

Edith threw herself into his arms. Her father laid his hand on her head, and prayed audibly. She arose more calm, and asked him if she should not call the faithful slaves.

"No, my child," he said; "let the poor children" — he always named them thus — "let the poor children sleep. God is here. I hold your hands in mine. What more do we want? Let the quiet night pass. The morning will be glorious! it will open for me in another world."

It was a beautiful sight, that young and timid woman sustaining her aged father, and he trusting so entirely in God, and feeling no

anxiety, no grief, but that of leaving her alone.

As she sat thus holding his hand in hers, his breath became less frequent; he fixed his eyes on hers with a tender smile. His breathing stopped — his spirit was gone!

Edith did not shriek, or faint. It was the first time she had been in the chamber of death, and a holy calmness, a persuasion that her father's spirit was still there, came over her. She closed his eyes, and sat long with his hand strained in hers.

The first note of the early birds made her start. She arose, and opened the window. The morning had dawned, and every leaf, every blade of grass, was glittering in the early dew. Her father's horse, that had borne him so many years, was feeding in the enclosure. At the sound of the window, he came forward: then a sense of her loss came over Edith, and she burst into tears.

CHAPTER XI.

"—— Whene'er the good and just
Close the dim eye on life and pain,
Heaven watches o'er their sleeping dust,
Till the pure spirit comes again.
Though nameless, trampled, and forgot,
His servant's humble ashes lie,
Yet God has marked and sealed the spot,
To call its inmate to the sky."

It was one of those brilliant and transparent days of June, never surpassed in any climate. The little church stood clearly defined against the deep blue sky. The ocean, as the sun shone on it, was gemmed with a thousand glancing diamonds, and here and there a light sail rose and fell upon it, like the wings of a bird. It was so still that the hum of the noontide insects was distinctly heard. At intervals, the slow tolling of the little bell sent its echoes back from the surrounding forest.

It was the day of the funeral of the beloved pastor, and small groups of the parishioners began to collect about the church and the

house. Heartfelt grief seemed to shadow every countenance, but the severe and reserved character of the New England Puritans allowed them to make no demonstration of sorrow: they shut up within themselves every trace of emotion, and spoke only in whispers, with a stern, determined air.

The garb and appearance of the people was rough and homely. There were farmers with their wives, on pillions; fishermen with their rough sea-coats; aged women, bent and wrinkled, who had come to lay in the grave one whom they had hoped would have prayed at and blessed their own burial.

The house at length was filled with those who had the nearest claim, and the ministers of the surrounding villages darkened, with their black dress, the little apartment.

The two slaves stood near the bier, and the excitable temperament and violent grief of the poor Africans contrasted with the stern, and solemn, and composed countenances around them.

Edith at last came in. She was calm, but very pale; and, as she entered the room, she gave her hand to those who stood nearest. She tried to speak, but the words died on her

lips. Dinah was in a moment at her side. Her delicate and youthful beauty contrasted by her sable friend, and her lonely, unprotected state touched the hearts of these stern, but also tenderly affectionate Puritans, and there were tears in many eyes, as they looked at her with respect and interest.

The windows were all open; the concert of joyous birds, in their season of love and happiness, showed no sympathy with man in his grief. It was so still that the silvery sound of the waves, as they touched the beach, was distinctly heard; and the voice of prayer, as it broke the silence, was the only human sound.

The voice of prayer ceased, and the quick hoof of a horse was heard. In a few moments Seymore entered. He had heard of the death of his friend, and, impelled by an irresistible impulse, he could not remain at his studies. As he entered he was violently agitated, for death and sorrow were new to him.

The color rushed to Edith's pale cheek, as she silently gave him her hand; but she felt a calmness which she could not herself understand. A change had been wrought in her character by that nightly death-bed, and by

four days of lonely sorrow. She felt that she must rely on herself.

The changes that are wrought by sorrow and reflection in a timid woman are not less apparent than those wrought by love. They seem, at first, to take from the exquisite femininenes of the character, but they bring out the latent beauty and strength of her spiritual nature. It is said "that every wave of the ocean adds to the beauty of the pearl, by removing the scum that reveals its interior and mysterious light." It is thus with time and sorrow: they reveal to ones self the inward pearl beyond all price, on which we must forever rely to guide us.

The oldest of the parishioners now approached, to bear their beloved pastor on their shoulders to the silent grave-yard. The ceremonial of a country burial is extremely simple, but they had then an affecting custom which has since been discontinued. As they bore the body to the grave, they sang an anthem, and, as it entered the little enclosure, the groups on each side receded, and uncovered their heads. The boys were hushed to awe, as the anthem rose on the evening air; the sun sank behind the forest, and its last rays were reflected from the grave of this servant of God.

The exquisite beauty of the scene oppressed and wearied Edith as she returned to her solitary home. She felt that though nature may sympathize with our joy, there is nothing in her bosom that responds to our sorrow.

But she did not return alone: Seymore had followed her; and, as they entered the deserted room, her father's arm-chair was in its accustomed place: even his slippers had been accidentally placed ready for him. The curtain had been removed from her mother's picture, and as she approached it, she met its pitying eyes fixed upon her. The unnatural tension of the nerves, which had denied her, for the last four days, the relief of tears, gave way, and the very fountains of her soul seemed opened. She sank down on a chair, and yielded to the overwhelming emotion.

There are states of the mind when the note of a bird, the fall of a leaf, the perfume of a flower, will unlock the bars of the soul, as the smallest sound will loosen the avalanche. The unexpected sight of her mother's picture had overpowered Edith. O that we should receive a mother's love in infancy, when we cannot value or understand it; and, in after life, when we need it most,

when we long for the heart that has cherished us, "we must go back to some almost forgotten grave," where that warm heart lies that loved us as no other will ever love us.

Seymore was terrified: he had never seen grief like this, and he walked the room with rapid and agitated steps.

Edith longed to be alone. She tried to conquer her emotion, but the sobs that came from the bottom of her heart shook her whole frame. At last she said, "Pray leave me; I wish to be, *I must* be alone."

Seymore could not leave her thus. He took her passive hand. "O," said he, "would that I could spare you one of these tears! If you could know how I reverence your sorrow, how my heart bleeds for you — O pardon me — if you could see my heart, you would see there a devotion, a reverence, such as angels feel in heaven. Might I dare to hope that you would forgive, that you would pardon the poor, unknown, homeless scholar, that he has dared to love you?"

Edith had become calm as he spoke thus impetuously, and her hand grew cold in his. She looked up: a beautiful and timid hope shone in her eyes; and, though her tears fell

fast, a smile was on her lips. "We are both homeless," she said, — "both orphans."

He caught from her expression a rapturous hope. At this moment the faithful slave Dinah opened the door to look after her young mistress. It was the first time since her childhood, that the face of her sable friend had been unwelcome to Edith; but perhaps it was happy for both; it arrested their tumultuous emotions, and gave Seymore, who left the room immediately, time to arrange his thoughts, and reflect on the blissful prospect opening before him.

Edith held out her hand to her friend. I have before remarked the figurative expressions in which Dinah clothed her thoughts. Her language and her feelings were fervid, like her climate.

"I thought," she said, "the heartsease had withered in your bosom; but it has sprung up, and is blooming again." Then seeing the crimson overspread Edith's cheek, she added, "perhaps your warm tears have revived it." But, as if ashamed of having said something not perfectly true, she took Edith's hand, looked earnestly in her face, as if asking an explanation of this sudden change.

Edith was wholly overcome. She threw herself into the arms of the faithful slave, and longed to hide herself there. None but a mother could understand her feelings, or one who had been to her in the place of a mother, and knew every beating of her innocent heart.

There are moments when woman needs the sympathy of a mother, that first and dearest friend of every human being. Dinah could not understand the imaginative character of Edith's mind; she could not sympathize with her thirst for knowledge, her love of the beautiful and the unknown; but the tear in her eye, and her quivering lip, as she pressed her child closer and closer to her, as though she would cherish her in her inmost heart, showed that she understood her nature, and sympathized in her happiness with all a woman's heart.

That night, when Edith laid her head on her pillow, she felt a secret joy, a lightness of heart, which she could not understand. She reproached herself that she could feel so happy so soon after the death of her father. She did not know how insensibly she had suffered an interest in Seymore to grow in her heart, and that the sentiments of nature

are weak when brought into contact with an absorbing passion. When she came to offer her prayer for guidance and protection, a feeling of gratitude, of thankfulness, overpowered all other emotions, and she closed her eyes, wet with grateful tears.

CHAPTER XII.

"Is this a tale?
Methinks it is a homily."

Seymore indulged himself with a few days of perfect, unalloyed happiness. The tumultuous feeling of joy subsided, the dark shade that had begun to gather over his mind vanished, and a sober certainty of bliss — bliss too great, he feared, for mortal, appeased his too keen sensibility to his own imperfections.

The character of Edith was formed to produce this effect. There was nothing exaggerated in it. Her solitary life, without mother or sister, had taught her great self-reliance; while her genuine humility had preserved her from that obstinacy of opinion that a want of knowledge of the world sometimes creates. The grave and solid studies she had entered into with her father had strengthened her mind, as it were, with the "bark and steel" of literature; while the native tenderness of her heart had prevented her from becoming that odious creature, a

female pedant. Her greatest charm was the exquisite femininenes of her character: this perhaps, without religion, would have degenerated into weakness, or, without an enlightened reason, into superstition.

How entirely is the divine spirit of Christianity adapted to woman's nature! loving as she does, and trembling for the objects of her love; doomed

> "To weep silent tears, and patient smiles to wear,
> And to make idols, and to find them clay."

If ever woman enjoyed all worldly advantages, if ever she was flattered, made an idol, and worshipped, it was in Europe previous to the French Revolution. Yet the letters and memoirs of the women of that time, light and frivolous as they are, reveal a depth of sadness, a desolation of spirit, a weariness of life, — destitute as many of them are of all aspiration after an immortal hope, — that tells us how indispensable to woman's nature are the hopes and consolations of religion. Love was at that time the object of woman's existence, — a love that, with our standard of morals, leaves a stain as well as a wound; but, with their peculiar notions, it robbed them neither of the adulation of society, nor

of their own self-respect. But, with all this, together with their influence in the affairs of state, we read their memoirs not only with a shame that burns on the cheek, but with feelings of the deepest commiseration.

How few, even of the happiest among women, are blest with that love that can fill and satisfy a woman's heart! How many, disappointed and weeping o'er "idols of clay," stretch out the arms of their souls for something they can lean on in safety! How many, solitary at heart in the midst of gayety, turn away to look into themselves for something more satisfying! How many broken and contrite spirits feel that he alone who knows what is in the heart of man, can teach them to bear a wounded spirit!

How full of sympathy for woman is the New Testament! He knew the heart of woman who said, "She is forgiven; for she has loved much."

It must have been a woman who first thought of prayer. Madame de Stael says that a mother with a sick child must have invented prayer; and she is right: a woman would first pray, not for herself, but for the object of her tenderness.

It had been an object much at heart with

Mr. Grafton to save a little property for his daughter. He had succeeded in purchasing the small house, and a few acres about it, which was kept in perfect order and good cultivation under the excellent management of Paul.

Edith's unprotected state, being without near relatives, made him desirous that she should have an independent home among his attached but humble parishioners. He knew that she was scarcely less beloved by them than himself. But he looked forward to his place being filled by a stranger; and he was mainly anxious that her comfort should not depend on the bounty, or even the gratitude, of the most disinterested of his flock.

He was able to accomplish his wish, and leave her a small patrimony, abundantly equal to the wants of their frugal establishment; and Edith thanked God, with tears of gratitude, that she was not obliged to separate herself from the graves of both her parents.

The summer and winter that followed her father's death were passed in tranquillity by Edith, watched over and guarded with the most faithful care by her two sable friends. No pastor had yet been chosen in her father's place; and an unacknowledged but cherished

hope arose in her mind, that Seymore might one day stand in that sacred place, hallowed in her affections, and now regarded with trembling hope.

Seymore indulged himself with as many short visits to Edith as his circumstances would allow, always struggling as he was with almost insurmountable obstacles, and straining every nerve to attain that goal of his hopes, a position in society that would allow him to claim his bride. The joy that her presence imparted to his whole being, the change that came over him the moment his weary eye caught sight of the steeple that rose above the dear spot of all his dreams, the sunshine that she diffused in the dark places of his mind, prevented Edith from being sensible of the change, the painful change, that a constant struggle with the coarse realities of his position had made in his noble nature. She had often, indeed, said, with Jenny Deans, "It is no matter which has the siller, if the other wants it." But Seymore's nature was proud as well as tender.

He possessed, as we have before seen, the temperament of the poet — that pure, rare, and passionate nature so little able to contend

with the actual difficulties of life — to whom every-day regular labor is a burden hard to bear. We have seen that his deep religious impressions had made him consecrate all his fine powers to the service of God; and the tenderness of his conscience made him fear that the sacrifice was imperfect. The conflict was ever in his soul. He was unable to satisfy his own aspirations after a spirituality and purity, which is the slow growth of a life of exertion. Despondency so intimately allied to the poetic temperament produced a morbid sensibility, a sort of monomania in his mind, having the effect of those singular mirages seen from the sea-shore, where the most trivial and familiar objects are magnified to temples and altars, and hung, as it were, in the clouds.

We touch with a reverend spirit and trembling hand the mysterious influences of hidden causes, uniting with unhappy external circumstances, to involve those who seem formed to bless and to be blessed in a self-tormenting melancholy. I know not that, under any circumstances, Seymore's would have been a happy spirit. Under the present, his love for Edith seemed the only light that could save him from total shipwreck.

The two lovers wrote to each other as often as the state of communication between different parts of the country would allow, before post-roads had been established, and when letters were often entrusted to wandering Indians, and the postage paid with a little tobacco, or a handful of meal.

We may judge of the nature of Seymore's letters by one of Edith's, which appears to be an answer to one of his:

October, 1692.

How can I be so little solitary, when I am more alone than ever? I awake from dreams of you to feel your presence still with me; and my first emotion is gratitude to God for having given me this happiness. Forgive me, beloved father! that I can be so content without you! The bonds of nature are weakened, when an absorbing emotion fills the heart. The time may come when nature will be avenged. Ah, it cannot be wrong to love as I do. God has opened this fountain in the desert of life, as a solace for all its evils. Ah, how can those who love be sufficiently grateful to God? Every hour should be an act of adoration and praise.

You will tell me, my friend, that this all-

absorbing love should be given to God. I cannot separate God from his works. This beautiful nature — the ocean, in all its majesty, the quiet stars, as they seem to look down upon us, the beauty spread every where around me — remind me always of God. I cannot represent to myself God in his personal form: I feel him every where, and I love him especially for having made us capable of love.

That religion should be a different thing from this pervading love and reverence, I cannot yet understand. Faith is the gift of God; such faith as you, my dear friend, wish me to possess; but it seems to me, like all the other precious gifts of the soul, to be obtained by earnest prayer and infinite strivings. When the young man mentioned in the gospel came to our Saviour, he demanded of him no profession of mysterious faith, but only a proof of disinterested love.

Religion is not a distinct thing from the every-day life, as — pardon me, my dear friend — I think you would make it. It is like the air we breathe, requisite for a life of goodness, but not less nor more perceptible to our well-being than the air is to our existence. It should not make itself felt in storms

and tempests, in hot and cold fits, but in a calm and equal power, sustaining, purifying, and nourishing our souls.

You believe the direct influence of the Spirit of God upon every individual mind is necessary, to make him a religious being. I cannot but think that the *indirect* influence, the beautiful and ever-renewed miracle of nature, the observation of God's providence in the care of his creatures, and the study of the adaptation of Christianity to our particular dispositions — not merely by a process of reasoning, but aided by the religious sentiment which seems to me innate and natural to every human being — is more powerful.

And now that I have finished my sermon, let me scold you for wronging yourself, as you too often do. *Truth* is not to be set aside, in looking at our own characters. We should do the same justice to ourselves that we do to others. There is a secret dishonesty in depreciating ourselves. Could I esteem and honor you as I do, were you what you call yourself? I honor you for all the noble exertions you have made, — for the ardor of your love of truth and duty. Ah, call me not a partial and blinded judge: your true honor and your most precious hap-

piness are too dear to me to allow me to be a false or partial friend. I would give you a little, a very little vanity; not enough to make you a sumptuous robe, but just enough to keep you from the cold.

You say you look upon this delusion of witchcraft, that is spreading through the country, with fearful and trembling interest, and that you believe God may permit his will to be made known by such instruments as these. God forbid that I should limit his power! but I fear these poor children are wicked or diseased, and that Satan has nothing to do with it.

The old woman at the cliff is now very ill: I trust God will take her from the world before she is seized for a witch. There are many ready to believe that she has ridden through the air on a broomstick, or gone to sea in an egg-shell. But you do not love me to jest on this subject. Forgive me! I will not jest again.

And this balmy Indian summer, — it seems as if it would last forever. But I am so happy now, I can hardly believe there is sorrow in the world, or winter in the year. Winter has no terror now: the long evenings and nights bring me dreams of you, and I

awake with the consciousness that you are mine. * * *

Perhaps the reader may think the letter just read a very singular love-letter. But it must be remembered that religion was the all-absorbing sentiment of the Puritans, and that Seymore's enthusiastic temperament made it the subject that most interested him in his letters to Edith.

Edith's mind was too well balanced and too happily constituted to allow her to partake of his extravagance; but she gave him that dearest proof of love, that of softening all his defects, and even exalting them into the most precious virtues.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Apart she lived, and still she rests alone:
Yon earthly heap awaits no flattering stone."

As it was mentioned in Edith's letter, the old woman who lived at the cottage by the cliff had become very ill, and it was apparent that she would never leave her bed again. Edith had been assiduous in her kindness. Dinah had been with her a part of every day, and had watched with her many nights. Edith insisted, at last, that her poor slave should sleep, and resolved herself to take her place by the bedside.

The old woman had made herself feared and hated by the scattered inhabitants. She was called a witch, and they deserted her sick bed, — a thing most rare among the kind-hearted dwellers in a thinly-peopled neighborhood.

It was a threatening evening when Edith took her station by the low pallet of the sick woman. The solitary hut, as I have mentioned, stood on the edge of the little bay;

and, at high water, it was almost washed by the waves.

How different the whole scene from that brilliant morning when Edith visited the tenant of the cottage! A leaden cloud seemed now to rest on the water, shutting out the fair sky; and, as the sullen waves rolled on the beach, a close and stifling air oppressed Edith's spirits.

The old woman was alone: her poor grandchild, wearied with the services of the day, had fallen asleep with her hand in her grandmother's, and her head falling over the pillow: her long hair rested on the old woman's face, which she seemed not to have strength to remove.

Edith's first care was to take the little girl from her grandmother's pillow; and, laying her gently on the foot of the bed, she took off her own shawl, and made a pillow for her head. The old woman looked at her without speaking, and a tear coursed slowly down her cheek.

Edith hoped the hardness was melting from her heart. She took her hand tenderly in hers, and whispered, "Cannot you put your trust in God?"

"I cannot pray — to God; no, it is too

late. But"— and her voice was interrupted with short, impeded breath. She pointed to the child, and looked at Edith with an expression so imploring, so full of tenderness for the child, of agony that she must leave her, of appeal to Edith's compassion, that the tears started to her eyes, and she answered, "Fear nothing: I will take care of her; I will be a mother to her."

The old woman pressed her hand: the look of agony passed away from her features, and she closed her eyes to sleep.

Edith sat silently by the bedside. The tempest that had been gathering over the water now shook the little dwelling: torrents of rain fell, and frequent flashes lighted the little room. At last, a gust of wind from the broken window extinguished the taper, and Edith was in total darkness. It was a warm night for the season, and no fire on the hearth to afford a spark by which she could relight it.

Edith trembled; but she tried to be calm. She only feared the old woman would die while she held her hand, which she imagined was already growing cold in hers.

The storm gradually passed away into silence. There was no sound but the short,

interrupted breath of her patient, and the soft, healthful, regular breathing of infancy. Edith longed for the dawn, and looked anxiously through the little casement for the first gray streak. As far as the eye could reach, the bay was white with foam; but no light yet dawned upon it from the morning.

The old woman awoke. "I cannot see you," she said; "a film is over my eyes."

Edith told her the lamp had been extinguished with the wind.

"Alas!" she said; "and I must die as I have lived, — in darkness."

Edith assured her she was not then dying, and begged her to try to pray, or to listen while she endeavored, as far as she was able, to offer a prayer to God.

"No," she said; "I have lived without prayer, and I will not mock God on my death-bed; but, if there is mercy for me, God may listen to you, pure and good as you have ever been."

Edith knelt; and, with lips trembling with timidity and responsibility, she uttered a low, humble, and earnest prayer.

The old woman seemed at first to listen; but her mind soon wandered: broken and, as it afterwards would almost appear, prophetic

sentences escaped from her lips: "Judgments are coming on this unhappy land, — delusions and oppression. Men and devils shall oppress the innocent. The good like you, the innocent and good, shall not escape!" Then she looked at the sleeping child: "Can the lamb dwell with the tiger, or the dove nestle with the hawk? But you have promised: you will keep your word; and when God counts his jewels"—

Edith arose from her knees, and trembled like a leaf. With inexpressible joy, her eyes fell on her own Dinah, standing looking on, with the deepest awe in her countenance. She had risen before the dawn, and come to relieve her young mistress, and had entered while Edith was kneeling. She now insisted on taking her place. Edith committed to her care the sleeping child, and then sought the repose the agitation of the night had rendered so necessary.

Before evening, the old woman died; and the next day she was to be committed to the earth. Little preparation was necessary for her funeral. No mourners were to be summoned from afar: there was no mockery of grief. She had lived disliked by her neighbors. A few old women came from curiosity

to see old Nanny, who had never been very courteous in inviting her neighbors to visit her; and they came now to see how she had contrived to live upon nothing.

The poor child, since the death of her only friend, had refused to leave the body, but sat subdued and tearless, like a faithful dog, watching by the side of her grandmother, apparently expecting her to return again to life.

Towards evening, a few persons were assembled in the hut to pay the last Christian services to the dead. The old woman had always said she would be buried, not in the common grave-yard, but near a particular rock where her last son who was drowned had been washed on shore and buried.

The neighbors were whispering among themselves, as to what was to be the fate of the poor child; every one avoiding to look at her, lest it should imply some design to take charge of her. The child looked on with wonder, as though she hardly knew why they were there. She had clung to Dinah as the best known among them; but, when the prayer was finished, and they began to remove the coffin, she uttered a loud cry, flew from Dinah's arms, and clung to the bier with all her strength.

The men instinctively paused and laid down their burden. The voice of nature in that little child was irresistible. They looked at Edith, who had now made known her promise to the grandmother to take care of the child, to ask what they should do. She took the child in her arms and quieted her till all was over, and then, consigning her to the care of Dinah, she was taken to their own home.

Edith felt deeply the responsibility she had assumed in the care and instruction of this child. She knew the tenderness of her own heart, her yielding nature, and feared she should err on the side of too much indulgence. She said to herself, "She shall never need a mother's care. I know the heart of the orphan, and no unkindness shall ever make her feel that she is motherless."

The poor little Phœbe had cried herself to sleep in Dinah's arms, and had been put to bed in her soiled and dirty state. The next morning a clean new dress banished the memory of her grandmother, and her childish tears were dried, and grief forgotten.

Dinah had brought to aid her the power of soap and water, and had disentangled her really soft and beautiful hair; and when

Edith came down, she would scarcely have known her again. The soil of many weeks had been taken from the child's skin, and, under it, her complexion was delicately fair: her cheeks were like pale blush roses, and her lips were two crimson rosebuds. But with this youthful freshness, which was indeed only the brilliancy of color, there was an expression in her face that marred its beauty. It was coarse and earthly, and the absence of that confiding openness we love to see in children. It reminded one of her old grandmother; although the one was fair, and smooth, and blooming, the other dark and wrinkled, a stranger would have said they were related.

Edith called the child to her, and kissed her fair cheek; but when she observed the likeness to the old woman, she turned away with a slight shudder, and something like a sigh.

Dinah, an interested observer of every passing emotion, said, softly, "The cloud is not gone over yet; a few more tears, and it will pass away from her young brow, and then it will be fair as your own."

"It is too fair already," answered Edith; "so much beauty will be hard to guide; and

then look at that dark, wayward expression."

"Say not so, my dear mistress;" and Dinah drew back the hair from her fair forehead. "Look at her beautiful face: in a few days your heart will yearn to her as mine does to you."

"God grant I may be as faithful to my duty," said Edith; but this is not the way to begin it;" and she drew the child to her knee, and a few moments of playful caressing brought smiles to the young countenance that nearly chased away the dark expression.

Edith, although superior to the age in which she lived, could not but be influenced by its peculiarities. The belief that an all-pervading and ever-present Providence directed the most minute, as well as the more important events of life, was common to the Puritans. She could not free herself from a superstitious feeling that this child was to have, in some way or other, she knew not how, an unfavorable influence upon her happiness. She was free, indeed, from that puerile superstition

"That God's fixed will from nature's wanderings learns."

But the tempest that shook the little building,

the incoherent ravings of the old woman's mind, and the solemn darkness of the hour when she promised to take charge of the child, had made a deep impression on her mind.

It is true "that coming events cast their shadows before." Who has not felt presentiments that certain persons and certain places are, in some mysterious way, we know not how, connected by invisible links with our own destiny? The ancients gave to this hidden and mysterious power the name of Fate. The tragedy of life arises from the powerless efforts of mortals to contend with its decrees. All that the ancient tragedy taught was, to bear evils with fortitude, because they were inevitable; but the "hope that is full of immortality" has taught us that they are the discipline appointed by Heaven to perfect and prepare our souls for their immortal destiny.

CHAPTER XIV.

"There has been too much cause to observe that the Christians that were driven into the American desert which is now called New England, have, to their sorrow, seen Azahel dwelling and raging there in very tragical instances."

COTTON MATHER.

THE delusion that passed through our country in 1692 has left a dark chapter in the history of New England. But it was not alone in New England that this fearful delusion influenced the minds and actions of men. It was believed all over Europe, in the seventeenth century, that evil spirits mingled in the concerns of mortals, and that compacts were made with them, and sealed with the blood of many of the most eminent persons of the age.

The desire to penetrate the mysteries of the spiritual natures that we believe every where to surround us, has taken different forms in different states of society. In New England, it seems to have begun in the wicked fancies of some nervous or really diseased children, who were permitted, at last, to ac-

cuse and persecute persons who were remarkable for goodness or intellect, and especially females who were distinguished for any excellence of mind or person.

An historian of the time says, "In the present world, it is no wonder that the operations of evil angels are more sensible than that of the good; nevertheless 't is very certain that the good angels fly about in our infected atmosphere to minister to the good of those who are to be the heirs of salvation. Children and ignorant persons first complained of being tormented and affected in divers manners. They then accused some persons eminent for their virtues and standing in society."

We have seen that Edith was disposed to think lightly of the subject at first, although she rejoiced that the old woman of the cliff had escaped suspicion by a timely death. But when she found that some of her own neighbors had been suspected, and that one old woman, in another village, for denying all knowledge of evil spirits, had been executed, she was filled with consternation; and when others, to save themselves from the same dreadful fate, increased the delusion of the times by confessing a compact with the

evil one, her pity was mingled with indignation. With so much clearness of intellect, and simplicity of heart, she could not persuade herself that it was any thing but wilful blindness, and a wicked lie.

But Edith began soon to feel much anxiety for her faithful Dinah. Persons in any way distinguished for any peculiarity were most likely to be accused, and she had secretly made arrangements to send her away, and conceal her, should the smallest indication of suspicion fall upon her. For herself Edith had no fears. It would have been hard to make this pure and simple-minded creature believe that she had an enemy in the world. She had not read the French maxim, that there may be such a weight of obligation that we can only be released from it by ingratitude.

Dinah had remarked, for several days, in the little Phœbe most strange and unnatural contortions, and writhings of the body, startings and tremblings, turning up her eyes and distorting her mouth; and also that she took little food, and often was absent from home; but, with her usual tenderness, and fear of giving anxiety to Edith, she had forborne to mention it.

Indeed, the child had always been wayward and strange, and especially indocile to Edith's instructions, although she seemed at times to have a strong affection for her. She was fond of long rambles in the woods, and of basking in the sun alone on the beach, and retained all her love for those vagrant habits she had learned from her grandmother. Edith had too much tenderness and indulgence to restrain what appeared a harmless and perhaps healthful propensity.

She had tried, however, to civilize the poor, neglected child, and had taught her to say her prayers every night, kneeling at her side.

It was a cold, chilly evening in our tardy spring: the little family had drawn around the cheerful evening fire, and the evening meal was just finished: Edith felt happy, for she had been reading a cheerful letter from Seymore. The shutters were closed, and she had indulged the little Phœbe, as she often did at this hour, with a noisy game. Edith was already tired: she looked at the clock: it was the bed hour for the child.

"Come, my child, be serious for a moment, and say your evening prayer." Phœbe kneeled: the prayer was short, but whenever

she came to the word God, or Savior, she cried out that she could not say it.

Edith concealed her fears, and said, very quietly, "I will say it for you; and now, my child, go peaceably to bed, and pray to God to keep you from telling falsehoods." Phœbe was awed by her calm, decided manner, and, without further disturbance, went quietly to bed.

Full of anxiety, and even terror, Edith sought her humble friend, told her the circumstance, and besought her to fly and conceal herself. She had provided the means for flight and concealment, and entreated her to use them before it was too late.

"I do not fear for myself, my dear mistress," said Dinah. "If the child has such design, she has already formed her plan and already accused us; and she will not be content with accusing me; you are not safe. You do not know her hard and stubborn temper. She is like the young hawk in the nest of the dove."

Seeing Edith was dreadfully alarmed, Dinah added, "Do not fear; we are in *his* hand who feeds the young ravens, and numbers the hairs of our heads."

Edith began to be a little more composed,

when a loud knocking was heard at the door. Two men entered, well known to Edith; the officials in all occasions of this nature. One was the deacon of the church, a heated fanatic, full of religious bigotry, whose head was too weak to govern the passionate and blind motions of his heart. While he had been under the restraint of Mr. Grafton's calm, enlightened reason, he had been only a zealous and useful officer of the church; but now, that he considered his own light as no longer hidden under a bushel, his zeal burned out with more violence, and he lent himself to all the wild fanaticism of the time. The other was an old man, an elder in the church, with much tenderness of heart; but he was timid, and relied little on his own judgment, which was so little enlightened that he easily yielded to what he afterwards, when the delusion passed away, bewailed with bitter tears.

Edith was perfectly acquainted with the characters of both. When she saw them enter, she turned deadly pale; but she pointed courteously to a seat, and placed herself instinctively between them and Dinah, to shield her, for she knew too well that there was no escape for her humble friend if once in their

power. She felt, therefore, a sensible relief when she found that she was herself the object of their visit.

Edith had had time to recover a little from her first consternation, and, with much self-possession, she asked who were her accusers, and demanded the right of being confronted with them.

The men informed her that she would be taken in the morning to the meeting-house for examination, and then it would be time enough to know her accusers: in the mean time they should leave a guard in the house, to prevent all attempts to escape.

Escape! ah, there was none for her. But Edith answered that she wished not to escape; that she should demand an examination. Alas! she knew not yet the spirit of the times. She was deluded by her own consciousness of innocence, and she thought fanaticism itself could not attach a suspicion to harmlessness like hers.

Not so Dinah. She was seized with a terror and grief that, for one moment, shook her faith in God, and took away all self-possession. She knew that innocence, youth, piety, beauty, had been of no avail against the demoniac fury of the accusers. She be-

sought, on her knees, and with floods of tears, her dear child — as, in her agitation, she called her — to avail herself of flight. She convinced Edith that they could easily elude the vigilance of their guard; that they could escape by water. Paul was an excellent boatman, the sea smooth as a mirror, the moon nearly full; they could reach Boston without suspicion. Or she would hide her in the woods: she herself knew a place where she could bring her food and clothing, and form a shelter for her, and keep her safe till all suspicion had ceased.

It would have been better for Edith had she yielded; but her own clear reason, free from the mists of fanaticism, deluded her into the persuasion that, as nothing could appear against her, it would confirm the suspicions against her if she were to avoid by flight a full and open examination.

Before they retired for the night, they kneeled down to pray. Dinah could not subdue her sobs; but Edith's voice was calm and firm as she asked the protection of the Father of the fatherless, and committed her poor friend to him who is no respector of persons.

Dinah entreated her mistress to allow her

to sit by her all night and watch, while she tried to sleep. This Edith refused: she wished to be alone. She had much to do to prepare herself for to-morrow, and she justly feared that Dinah's distress would soften her heart, and shake her firmness too much.

As they passed through the chamber, Dinah bearing the candle, the little Phœbe, restless in her sleep, had nearly thrown herself out of bed. Edith stopped, and, bending over, replaced the bedclothes, and said softly to Dinah, "If to-morrow should be fatal, if I should not live to keep my promise to the old woman, I can trust her to you: you will be to her, as you have been to me, a mother; O, more than a mother?"

She stopped; her voice choked. She removed the thick hair from the brow of the sleeping child, but even in sleep her face wore the frown that so often marred its beauty. "Dinah," she said, "she is yours; you will love her as you have me."

"That I can never promise; but I will do my duty," said Dinah.

Edith pressed her lips — thirsting as they ever did for a return of love—on the fair brow,

and then, taking the candle from Dinah, entered her own room. Her heart was oppressed with apprehension, and she would not trust herself to say good night to her faithful servants.

CHAPTER XV.

"But ye! ye are changed since ye met me last:
There is something bright from your features past;
There is that come over your heart and eye,
Which speaks of a world where the flowers must die.
Ye smile; but your smile has a dimness yet:
Oh! what have ye looked on since last we met?"

THE VOICE OF SPRING.

BEFORE the events mentioned in the last chapter occurred, the winter had passed away, and the reluctant footsteps of our northern spring began to appear. The purple Hepatica opened her soft eye in the woods, and the delicate Sanguinaria spread her snowy bosom to catch the pale sunbeam. Already the maple-trees had hung out their beautiful crimson blossoms, and the thrilling note of the song-sparrow echoed through the forest. Then came the chilling wind from the east, its wings loaded with frost; and the timid spring hid her tender blossoms, and wrapped herself in a watery veil.

The weather and the spring were unnoticed by Dinah, when she sought, soon after

sunrise, the pillow of her mistress. The night had brought no rest to her throbbing temples and anxious heart: she was surprised, therefore, to find Edith still sleeping. She had sat up late, arranging her father's and her own papers, and providing, by a distribution of her little property, for the old age of her two faithful servants. They were no longer slaves; Mr. Grafton had given them freedom at his death. She left the little Phœbe under their guardianship. She had also written a letter to Seymore, to ask him to come and aid her by his counsel in this extremity. It was nearly dawn when she sought her pillow; and sleep, which has been called the friend of sorrow — "but it is the happy who have called it so" — had only for a few moments left her with untroubled dreams. Her sleep was not heavy; for the gentle footstep of Dinah awoke her. When she saw her humble friend's troubled expression, she tried to smile; and, stroking her dark cheek as she bent over her, she said, "We must look bright to-day, my poor Dinah, or they will think we are afraid."

They prepared for the arrival of the officers; and, when breakfast was ready, the little Phœbe was not to be found. Although Di-

nah looked very grave, this occasioned no anxiety in Edith, when she recollected the vagrant habits of the child.

After breakfast, which was indeed not tasted, the same persons who had visited her the night before came to conduct Edith to the meeting-house, the place of examination. The house was nearly full; and among that crowd there was scarcely one to whom Edith had not been a friend and a benefactor, as far as her humble means would allow. As she entered, there was one by whose sick bed she had watched; another whose infant had died in her arms; and children stood looking on with stupid wonder to whom she had given flowers, and primers, and, more than all, her own gentle smile. But now every eye was averted, or turned on her with suspicion and terror, — so hardening is the power of fanaticism.

I believe I have said that my heroine was not beautiful; but the inward harmony must have given a spiritual beauty to features animated with intellect, and softened by tenderness of heart; and a self-relying innocence and purity imparted something more of grace to her person than the most finished art could have given.

Edith became very pale as she entered; and Dinah, who had followed her closely, begged permission to stand near and support her. This was denied, and she was placed between two men, who each held an arm, and in front of those who were to examine her.

The afflicted — that is, the accuser — was now called in. Edith looked eagerly around, and, with grief and astonishment, saw her little Phœbe, the child of her care, when almost close to her, utter a piercing cry, and fall down in violent convulsions. She started forward to assist and raise her, but the men drew her rudely back. And this was her accuser!

At the same time with Edith, a poor old woman, nearly eighty years of age, was brought in. Her accuser was her own grandchild, — a girl about the same age as Phœbe. Together they had concerted this diabolical plot, and had rehearsed and practised beforehand their contortions and convulsions, excited, no doubt, by the notoriety of wicked children they had heard of.

The poor old creature was bent and haggard. She would have wept, but, alas! the fountain of her tears was dried up; and she

looked at her grandchild with a sort of stupid incredulity and wonder. Her inability to weep was regarded as an infallible proof of her guilt. As she stood beside Edith, she shook with age and terror; and Edith, touched with pity, though she trembled herself, and was deadly pale, tried to give her a smile of hope and encouragement. The poor old wretch did not need it: she not only confessed to every thing of which she was accused, but added such circumstances of time and place, and of the various forms the devil had taken in her person, that Edith almost sickened with disgust. She could not understand how an old person, on the very verge of the grave, could wish to lengthen out her few years by such base and wicked lies.

The young cannot believe that the old are unwilling to die. But it is an acknowledged truth, that the longer we have worn our earthly vesture, the dearer becomes the thin and faded remnant. The young resign their hold of life with hardly a regret, while the old cling with the utmost tenacity to the wavering and nearly-parted thread.

Edith turned away from the partner of her suspected guilt, and asked to have the child

brought near her. She held out her hand, and looked mildly in her face. The moment the child touched Edith's hand, she was still: this was a part of the plot: but the moment her hand was withdrawn, she fell down again in violent convulsions, and cried out that pins were thrust into her. In the midst of this acting, she caught Dinah's stern, reproachful eye fixed upon her, and she instantly became still. But this did not aid poor Edith's cause; for they cried out that the child was struck dumb by the accused.

The old woman also, feeling perhaps that Edith's integrity was a reproach to her own weakness, cried out that she was pierced with pins, and pinched by Edith, although with invisible fingers, as she stood near her; and, turning back her sleeve from her bony and wrinkled arm, she showed a discolored spot, which she declared had not been there when she left her home. It had not, indeed; but every one knows how quickly a bruise is visible in the stagnant blood of age, and the mark had been left by the hand of the person who held her arm.

Edith, wearied and disgusted, desired to be taken back to her prison, there to await her trial before the judges of the Province.

Every thing had occurred that was most unfavorable to her, and she felt but too well that she must bear the suspicion of a crime of which she was as unconscious as the unborn infant. Her heart yearned towards the poor infatuated child, and she earnestly begged that she might be permitted to talk with her alone. This was granted, and she was guarded to her prison.

There was no proper prison in our village, and Edith was guarded in one of the rooms of the deacon's house who had been so active in her accusation.

During the night that passed after her examination, Edith had time to arrange her thoughts. Before she knew who her accusers were, she had been moving in the dark; and now, when she thought of the whole insane proceeding, she could scarcely believe they would be guilty of the monstrous crime of condemning her on the testimony of that child alone.

When the deacon visited her in the morning, she said, with much warmth, "Have the days of Queen Mary come back? Am I to be suspected, condemned, imprisoned, on the testimony of that poor child, — the child that I took to my home when no one else among you would offer her a shelter?"

The deacon answered, "that the testimony was so much more convincing, as the child had lived in the house with her."

"And is her word to be taken against the testimony of my whole life? You know how I have lived among you from my infancy."

"Yes; but God may choose the fairest of his works as instruments of his sovereign will."

"Have you forgotten my father?" said Edith, — "how he lived among you? He was ever your friend — always near you in every trouble. And myself" — she stopped; for she would not remind them of her deeds of kindness, — of the daily beauty of her life in their humble circle; nor would she recall her orphanhood, her unprotected state; but she looked down, and her eyes filled with tears. "God," she said, at length, "is the protection of the orphan; and he will avenge this great sin, and you will answer for it at his bar."

The deacon looked sternly decided and unmoved, but he began to urge her to confess, — to do as others had done, and save her life by acknowledging the crime.

Indignation kindled in Edith's eye; but

she checked it, and said, "I cannot, I durst not, belie my own soul, and commit so great a sin. God, who is the searcher of my heart and your heart, as we shall both answer at the judgment day, is witness that I know nothing of witchcraft, — of no temptation of the evil one. I have felt, indeed — as who has not? — the temptations that arise from our own passions; but I know no other, and can confess no other."

She then desired that Phœbe might be brought to her, and Dinah permitted to attend her in her prison. They consented that Edith should see the child in the presence of one witness; and the mild old man who was with the deacon said he would bring her himself.

CHAPTER XVI.

"I am constrained to declare, as the result of as thorough a scrutiny as I could institute, my belief that this dreadful transaction was introduced and driven on by wicked perjury and wilful malice."

UPHAM'S LECTURE ON SALEM WITCHCRAFT.

"Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?"

LEAR.

THERE seems sometimes to be an element of evil in the heart of a child, that would almost persuade us to believe in original sin. In the breast of those who have been favorably born and kindly nurtured, it may sleep forever; but, when the conscience has been soiled in early childhood, it awakes the appetite for sin, and the restraint that comes afterwards curbs without subduing the disposition to evil.

It is true that poor Phœbe had felt a strong affection for her grandmother; and, without all other moral restraint, it was the only point in which her heart could be touched. The vagrant life she had led had also had its influence:

" Happy because the sunshine was her dower,"

she could not always be insensible to the beauty of the heaven that had so often canopied her sleep, or the grandeur of the ocean where she had passed whole days playing with the waves. She rebelled against the restraint that every feminine occupation imposed on this wild liberty. She quailed, indeed, before Dinah's more resolute spirit; but Edith's gentleness had failed to touch her heart; and she knew that her forced obedience to Dinah was only the result of Edith's authority.

When the child appeared, Edith held out her hand with her own grave, sweet smile; but, the moment the child saw her, she began again to act her part, and to throw her body and limbs into violent contortions. Edith was not alarmed: she saw it was feigned; and, drawing her to her knees, she held both her little hands tightly clasped in hers. Phœbe became instantly calm; but this was a part of the system of deception, — that, as soon as the accused touched the afflicted, they should be calmed and healed.

Edith looked in her face, and said, very kindly, " Tell me, my poor child, who has persuaded you to do this wicked thing, — to

accuse me of this horrible crime? tell me truly. I shall not be angry with you, I shall not punish you, if you tell me the truth. Who first spoke to you about it? What have they promised you for bringing this trouble on me?"

The child, unmoved, said, "You yourself made me do it."

"I! O, my poor Phœbe, how can you be so wicked as to tell this dreadful lie? Do you not know that God sees you and hears you, and that he will punish you for it? I may die: you may cause my death; but you will live to repent; and, O, how sorry you will be in after years, when you think how much I loved you, and you have caused my death! But, my poor Phœbe, you know not what you do; you know not what death is."

"My grandmother died," said the child.

"Ah, yes; but she died quietly in her bed, and you were sleeping near; and when I took you in my arms to look at her, you saw only her peaceful countenance. But I shall not die thus: I shall be dragged before angry men, and, with irons on my hands and ankles, I shall be lifted to the scaffold, and there, before hundreds of angry faces turned

towards me, I shall die alone! not peacefully, as your grandmother did, when with my own hands I closed her eyes, but horribly, in pain and agony! and you will have done this, — you that I have loved so"—

Phœbe became very red, and the tears came to her eyes.

Edith thought she had touched the child's heart, and continued: "I knew you could not be so wicked, so young and looking so innocent. No, my child; you love me, and you will unsay all you have said, and we will go home again together."

The child answered, with much violence, "No, no, never! you pricked me with pins, and you tormented me."

"O, monstrous!" said Edith; "if I could believe in devils, I should believe you were now possessed. O, it is not natural! so young, and with a woman's nature! You do not love me, then. I have punished you when you have done wrong, and you have not forgiven me: you wish to be revenged. You do not answer. Phœbe! tell me: are you angry that I punished you? God knows it pained me to do so. But your poor grandmother gave you to me that I might try to make you a good child; and if I had not

punished you when you did wrong, you would have grown up a wicked woman. God grant you may not be so now! you are already revenged."

Phœbe said, very sullenly, "You punished me twice."

"Good God! and is it for that you have brought on me this terrible evil? Can such revenge dwell in so young a heart?"

Edith walked several times across the room, trying to calm her agitated nerves. The child stood with an expression of obstinate determination in her whole manner.

At length Edith went to her, and took her, as she had often done at home, in her arms.

"My dear Phœbe, do you remember the day when your grandmother died? I was there by her bedside; and you, a poor, deserted child, were crying bitterly. I took you home to my house. Like myself, you were an orphan; and I prayed to the orphan's Father that from me your little heart might never know a pang of sorrow. You fell asleep in my arms; and since then I have ever loved you almost as though I were indeed your mother, and you were my own child. And you, Phœbe, you have loved me, have you not?"

The child was silent.

"Do you remember the fever you had soon after? when you were restless in your bed, and I took you in my arms, and all night my bosom was your pillow, and I watched you many nights, and thought not of sleep or fatigue when I held your little hand, burning with fever, in my own all night? Ah! you loved me then; you will love me again, and —

"I never loved you," said the child; "I do not love you now."

Edith put her quickly from her arms, and turning to the man who was present, "Take her away," she said; "take the poor child away. O, my God! is it for this I have lavished on her the tenderness of my heart! I warmed her in my bosom, and she has stung me to the quick. O, had I been less indulgent, I might have subdued her stubborn nature. Of what avail has been a life of self-denial, of benevolence? Of what avail that I have striven to enlighten my own mind and to do good to others? In one moment, by that child of my own cherishing, but the creature of my own bounty, I am suspected of a horrible, contemptible crime; humiliated to the very dust. O, my Father!

it is too much." She covered her face with her hands, and burst into tears.

The person who had witnessed the scene with the child was the same elder I have mentioned as possessing much tenderness of heart, but too weak a head to listen to its dictates when opposed to the influence of others. He had been much affected by her appeal to the child, and came back to urge her, if she had any friends to espouse her cause, to send for them. He said the fanaticism was increasing; that the prisons in many villages were filled with the accused; that the hearts of the people were hardened against them; and that her own cause had been much injured by the confession of the old woman: and he ended by entreating her to confess also, and save her life.

To the last proposal, Edith did not answer. She said she had already written to the only friend on whom she could rely, and that Paul had gone himself with her letter. Her cause, she said, seemed already lost, and all she wished at present was, that Dinah might be permitted to visit her, and that she might be left alone.

When Edith was alone, she felt the depression that succeeds to great excitement. She

looked back on her life with that sick and heart-broken feeling that the young experience after severe disappointments. She was too young to die; and, though her life had been comparatively blameless, the excess of feeling she had lavished on a few idols seemed now to her almost like a crime. She had forgotten, she thought, that her duties had been plain, and simple, and humble, lying all about her path like unnoticed flowers, while she had longed for something more exciting to fill her heart.

It is easy for the accused to believe themselves guilty. She trembled when she thought how many, not weaker than herself, when suspected and deserted by friends, had yielded to their fears, and even fancied themselves *guilty* of crimes which they abhorred; and she mentally prayed, "Ah, my Father, save me from myself." Then came the thought of Seymore, of his grief, his desolation! "Ah, who will understand him," she said; "who will comfort him when I am gone? But will he remember me?" thought she; "will he think of me in 'widowhood of heart?'"

Who would die and be wholly forgotten? We long intensely to live in the hearts that

love us now. We would not pass away "like the summer-dried fountain," forgotten when its sound has ceased. We would have our lowly grave visited by holy, twilight thoughts, and our image return at the hour of prayer. How few are thus remembered! Now Edith thought of her father, and all the yearning of her heart, which her love for Seymore had stifled, came back, and torrents of tears flowed as she recalled her happy childhood.

They were checked by the entrance of Dinah. She brought comfort with her, and a cheerful countenance, for she did not know the result of Edith's conversation with the child, and she was full of hope that Phœbe would retract all she had said.

Edith could not bear to undeceive her poor friend, and smiled, and thanked her as she arranged a nice, clean bed, placed the books she had brought within her reach, and pressed her to eat of the delicacies she had prepared. She arranged the little repast with all the neatness of home, and gave to the gloomy apartment an air of comfort; and Edith smiled again, and felt lightened of half her load of despondency, by the presence of this faithful guardian.

CHAPTER XVII.

"'T is past! I wake
A captive and alone, and far from thee,
My love and friend! yet fostering, for thy sake,
A quenchless hope of happiness to be;
And feeling still my woman's spirit strong
In the deep faith that lifts from earthly wrong
A heavenward glance." MRS. HEMANS.

THE next morning Edith was informed that Seymore had arrived. As soon as he received her letter he travelled with all the rapidity the state of the country permitted, when the journey from Boston to Salem was the affair of a day, as it is now of half an hour.

From all we have learned of the character of Seymore, the reader will not be surprised to find that, although never taking an active part in the persecutions of the time, the character of his enthusiasm was such that he lent an easy faith to the stories he had heard of the possessed, and believed that God was manifesting his power by granting, for a season, such liberty to the prince of evil.

When, however, he received Edith's letter, he felt pierced as it were with his own sword. He trembled when he thought of his almost idolatrous love, and with a faith which he fancied resembled that of Abraham, he believed the time had now come when he must cut off a right hand, and pluck out a right eye, to give evidence of his submission to the will of God.

With this disposition of mind he arrived at the scene of our narrative. In the mean time the tender-hearted elder had become so much interested to save Edith, that he contrived to have Seymore placed on the jury, hoping that his deep interest in her would be the means of returning a verdict of *not guilty*. Seymore was therefore spared the pain of an interview with Edith, which would probably have convinced him of her innocence, before the trial.

Edith awoke the next morning from a happy dream. She was walking with Seymore by the margin of the great ocean, and his low, deep voice mingled in her ear with the liquid sound of the dying wave. She awoke, a captive and alone: no, not alone, for the faithful Dinah was standing by her bedside, so tearful, so subdued, that the smile

the happy dream had left on Edith's lips instantly faded. She remembered it was the day of her trial, and she prepared to meet it.

These trials were held in the meeting-house, and were opened and closed with a religious service. This seems like a mockery to us, but our fathers thought they were performing a sacred duty; and however frivolous or disgusting were many of the details, the trial was rendered more appalling by giving to the whole the appearance of a holy sacrifice.

Edith was far from being insensible to the terrors of her situation, but she found it necessary to assume a cheerfulness she did not feel, in order to soothe the dreadful agitation of Dinah. The poor African trusted in God; but she could not shield her child from the tyranny of human power.

When Edith entered the thronged meeting-house, a paleness, like that of death, overspread her countenance. She requested that Dinah might stand near her to support her, lest she should faint. This was rudely denied. She was answered, "If she had strength to torment that child, she had strength to stand alone."

She could not wipe the tears that gushed

into her eyes at this cruel answer, for each hand was extended, and closely held by an officer,— a precaution always adopted in these trials, lest the prisoner should afflict some person in the crowded multitude.

She had no sooner become a little calm, than her eye sought Seymore among the crowd. She was shocked with the change an "o'erwrought spirit" had effected in his person. His pale forehead was traced with veins that were swelled almost to bursting ; a fire was burning in his dark, sunken eyes, and crimson spots flushed each cheek.

As Edith looked at him, her heart swelled with an infinite pity. For the moment, her own appalling situation melted away from her thoughts. For the moment, it was of little importance to her whether she lived or died. All she wished was to be near Seymore, to speak to him, to soothe and calm his agitated spirit.

She was recalled to herself by the opening of the trial. The prisoner was first commanded to repeat the Lord's prayer. This Edith did in a low, sweet voice, t sounded to the hushed audience like plaintive music.

It is not my purpose to enter into the details of this trial. It is enough that "every

idle rumor, every thing that the gossip of the credulous, or the fertile memories of the malignant could produce that had an unfavorable bearing on the prisoner, however foreign it might be to the indictment, was brought before the jury,"* in addition to the testimony of the child, and the falsehood of the old woman.

The cause was at length given to the jury. They did not leave their seats; and when it came to the turn of Seymore, who was the last to speak, the crimson blood rushed to the cheek, brow, and temples of Edith, and then left them paler than before: a sick sensation came over her, and she would have fainted, had she not been relieved by tears, burning hot, that gushed from her eyes.

Seymore had covered his face when he first entered, and had not looked at Edith. So hushed was the crowd, that the word "*guilty*," wrung as it were from him in the lowest whisper, was heard distinctly through the whole meeting-house. It pierced Edith's ear like the voice of a trumpet; and from that moment the spirit of a martyr entered her breast. She felt herself deserted by the

* Upham's History of Witchcraft.

whole of her little world, falsely convicted of a crime she abhorred, and left without human sympathy. She turned to God. "He who seeth in secret," she said, "knows my innocence;" and she bowed her head, and made no further answer.

The trial was closed as it began, — with religious services. A hymn was sung; and Edith, feeling, as I have said, an elevation that she could not herself understand, joined in the devotion. The others stopped; for they would not mingle their voices with one convicted of witchcraft: the very evil one was mocking them. Edith continued alone; and her rich, sweet tones thrilled their hearts like the voice of an angel. She was reminded by a whisper from Dinah that she was singing alone; and, ceasing, she blushed deeply, and covered her face from the curious gaze of the multitude.

As Edith returned to her prison, guarded on each side, and followed by Dinah, she thought of the Lady Ursula, whose cruel fate had moved her so deeply. And was she indeed the same person? The child that had wept her fate so bitterly was now to meet one far more terrible: and she felt

strength to meet it. Every wave, as it had passed over her, had brought out the hidden beauty and strength of her soul; and, though there was in her no air of triumph, a tranquil contentment and repose was expressed in her whole person.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"No, never more, O, never in the worth
Of its pure cause, let sorrowing love on earth
Trust fondly, — never more! The hope is crushed
That lit my life, — the voice within me hushed
That spoke sweet oracles."

The unnatural excitement that had borne our heroine up during the last part of her trial forsook her when she entered once more her dreary prison. She was again alone, — again a weak and timid woman. The momentary exaltation that a sense of injustice had given her when under the gaze of numbers, gave way to memories of the deep and unforgotten happiness she had connected with Seymore. All her sweet anticipations of soothing his spirit, of leading him to more rational views of God and of himself, faded away. In a few days, she would be no more, and remembered, perhaps, with pity or scorn. One last, lingering weakness remained: it was the fear of losing the respect and tenderness of Seymore.

Like all who love deeply, she had dated

her existence from the time she became acquainted with Seymore: all before had become a blank in her memory; but now her early years rose up before her, like the reflected sunlight on distant hills. The thought of her father came back with melting tenderness. Ah, now was he avenged for the short forgetfulness with which she had ever reproached herself.

She threw herself on her knees, and prayed silently. She felt calmed and elevated, as if in immediate answer to her prayer. All selfish and agitating emotions passed away. A spirit of forgiveness, of endurance, of calm and patient trust, entered her soul. She felt that, with Seymore's convictions and sense of duty, he could not have acted otherwise; he could not but bear his testimony to what he thought truth; and almost a divine pity for his errors, and a purer love for his truth, filled her heart.

She was informed that Seymore was waiting to see her. This was a trial she had expected, and she was now prepared to meet him. He entered trembling, pale, and wholly unmanned. As he tried to speak, his voice failed, and he burst into tears.

It is fearful to see a strong man weep.

Edith was not prepared for this excess of emotion. Those who have seen Retch's exquisite drawing of Cordelia when Lear awakes, and she asks "if he knows her," can imagine the tender pity of her expression as she went to him and placed her hand in his. A sweet smile was on her lips, — that smile that shows that woman can mingle an infinite tenderness with the forgiveness of every injury. He pressed her hand to his heart — his lips; and when he caught her eye, — "O, do not look so mildly at me," he said; "reproach me, scorn me, hate me: I can bear all rather than those meek eyes, — than that forgiving smile."

"Be calm, dear Seymore," she said; "with your convictions, you could not have done otherwise. You believe in the reality of these possessions. The evidence against me was more and stronger than has been sufficient to condemn many as innocent as I am. You can have no cause for self-reproach."

"Innocent! O, say not that you are innocent! God has many ways of trying his elect. You he has tried severely with temptations from the prince of evil. He chooses souls like yours. O, Edith, for my sake, for your own sake, acknowledge that you have

been tempted. It only is required that you should say you have been deceived; then all will be well."

For a moment, Edith's face was crimsoned. "What! become a traitor to my own soul! lose forever the unsullied jewel of truth, and the peace of a pure conscience! and do you counsel this?"

"Many have confessed," he said, "many of undoubted truth, of ripe wisdom, who could not be deceived, and who would not confess to a lie." *

"But *I* should confess to a lie, — a base and wicked lie. I have no faith in these temptations. I believe God suffers us to be tempted by our own passions and unrestrained imaginations, but not by visible or invisible

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* "Fifty-five persons, many of them previously of the most *unquestionable character for intelligence, virtue, and piety*, acknowledged the truth of the charges that were made against them, confessed that they were witches, and had made a compact with the devil. It is probable that the motive of self-preservation influenced most of them: an awful death was in immediate prospect. The delusion had obtained full possession of the people, the witnesses, the jury, and the court. By acknowledging the crime, they might in a moment secure their lives and liberty. Their principles could not withstand the temptation; they made a confession, and were rewarded by a pardon." — *Upham's Lectures on Salem Witchcraft.*

evil spirits. O, listen to me: go no further in this mad, this wicked delusion. Spare the innocent blood that will be shed. If I must die, let my death be the means of turning you and others from this dreadful sin."

"And can you bear to have your name sullied by this alliance with the wicked? Those who die as criminals are believed guilty of crimes; and can you consent to be remembered as the associate of evil spirits?"

"Falsehood can live but a few years," she answered; "there is an immortality in truth and virtue. I cannot blush to be confounded with the guilty; for it is my unwillingness to sully my conscience with a lie that leads me there."

Seymore was silent for a few moments. "Edith," he said at last, straining both her hands in his, "have you been able to think how cruel this death may be? Have you fortitude? Can you bear to think of it?" and he shuddered, and covered his face with his hands.

Edith for a moment turned pale. "I have ever shrunk," she said, "from physical pain. My own extreme timidity has never given me courage to bear the least of its evils. I believe, then, that it will be spared me: God

will give me courage at the moment, or he will mercifully shorten the pain; for what is beyond our strength we are not called to bear."

"And can you part with life thus triumphantly?"

"Ah, my friend, there is no triumph in my soul. In its deepest sanctuary, I feel that God will pardon my sins, and accept my death as in obedience to my conscience. But, O! I have not sought it: life is still sweet to me."

"You shall not die, — you must not! you will not leave me! Edith, have you forgotten our moments of bliss, — our dreams of happiness to come, — the quiet home, the peaceful fireside, where we hoped to pass our lives together? Have you forgotten how long, how truly, how fervently, I have loved you? and is this to be the close of all?"

Edith's hand trembled in his, but she answered cheerfully: "The close! ah, no: look upward. God has tried us both with grievous trials. Mine will cease first. Yours is the hardest to bear: to linger here — to do God's work alone. Let me be to you like one departed a little while before you, that would not be mourned, but remembered always."

They were both silent for some moments; Seymore contending with unutterable regret, oppressed with an emotion that was almost the agony of remorse.

Edith understood his contending emotions. "Think," she said, "that you have been the instrument of Providence to lead me to heaven. I do not regret to die early: God has permitted me to solve the mystery of life. I see his hand even from the moment when that child was committed to my care. Thank God, I can now submit to his will; and, although life were sweet with you, my death may bring you nearer to heaven."

"Edith," he said at last, "I have been deceived. Such faith, such divine forgiveness, such noble fortitude, cannot be the work of evil spirits. Your faith is purer and stronger than mine, — your reason more enlightened. I have erred, dreadfully erred."

A bright smile illumined her face, and she pressed his hand in hers.

"I have done most dreadfully wrong," he said; "I sinned from ignorance."

"God will forgive you," said Edith; "and I, — I cannot forgive, for I could not blame."

He started up. "It is not too late to repair this dreadful evil: it will be easy for you to escape. If I cannot gain a reversion

of the sentence, we can escape: we will leave this country of delusion and error; we will go home — to England. There, O Edith —"

The blood for a moment rushed to Edith's cheek and brow; but she answered, sadly, "No, Seymore, it cannot be; after all that has passed, it would ruin your character, your prospects, your usefulness, forever. We are too weak to stem, to oppose this mad delusion. Bigotry and power are all around us."

"You hesitate. Ah, you do not love me as you did;" and he became again violently agitated.

Edith took his hand in hers, and pressed it to her lips. "Tempt me not," she said, "with visions of happiness that can never be. Let us rather pray to God to support us in this bitter hour."

They bowed their young heads together, and their tears mingled. Edith's silent prayer was wholly for him. True to her woman's nature, she forgot herself in his deeper sorrow.

He was calm, and Edith would not prolong the interview; and Seymore left her all the more hastily as he was determined to employ every means to save her. He was not permitted to enjoy that happiness.

CHAPTER XIX.

"See, they are gone! —
The earth has bubbles, as the waters have,
And these are some of them. They vanished
Into the air, and what seemed corporal,
Melted as breath into the wind." SHAKSPEARE.

WHEN Edith was alone, she felt that weakness and exhaustion of the body that all the painful excitements of the day had produced. She threw herself on the bed, and Dinah was soon at her side.

"Sing me one of the hymns you used to sing in my happy childhood; perhaps I may sleep."

Dinah sat by the side of the bed, and Edith laid her head on the breast of her faithful friend, while she began in a tremulous, low tone, that became stronger and clearer as the holy fervor of the hymn inspired her.

Edith lay motionless, but between her closed eyelids the large tears forced themselves, and fell slowly down her cheeks. At length, like a tired infant, she slept.

Dinah laid her head gently on the pillow; with the tenderest hand, wiped away the tears; drew the covering over her; with noiseless step excluded the light, and then sat down to watch by her.

It was the bitterest hour poor Dinah had ever passed. She tried to pray, but she found submission impossible. She had had many trials. She had been torn from her native land, chained in a slave ship, exposed for sale in the slave market; but since she had been a Christian, she had blessed her various trials. Now her faith in God seemed entirely to fail.

She took, as she had often done to comfort her, the cool, soft hand of her mistress in hers. It was now burning hot, and her own tears, as they fell, seemed to scald her.

But just at that moment a thought darted into her mind, and she has often said that it was a direct inspiration from God. "I will save her!" was the thought. The blood rushed to her head and face, and then retreated again to the heart; she trembled, and, for the first time in her life, the poor African was near fainting. She fell on her knees: "Yes, God help me, I will save her." The operations of the mind at such moments are rapid

as lightning; and, in a few moments, her plan was arranged.

When Edith awoke and saw the change a few moments had wrought in Dinah's appearance, the light that shone in her eye, and her cheek "flushed through its olive hue," she feared, for an instant, that great anxiety and grief had shaken her reason.

"My poor Dinah," she said, taking her hand in hers, "you are ill; you are feverish; you have been too long shut up in this dismal room with me. Go out, I pray you, and take the cool evening air, and I will try to sleep again."

It was what Dinah wished, for she desired to consult Paul; but she busied herself with all those little nameless attentions that love alone can devise. As she was folding her mistress's hair for the night, Edith said, "Dinah, I can escape this dreadful death that awaits me."

"O, my dear mistress, how?" said Dinah, her whole face quivering with emotion.

"With a lie! by confessing that I have tormented that poor child, and that I am myself possessed by evil spirits."

Dinah drooped again. "You could not do that," she said; "no, you could not dishonor

yourself with a falsehood: but if you could escape without violating your conscience, would you not?"

"Certainly," answered Edith: "if God were to place the means of escape within my reach, I would make use of them, as I would use the means to recover from a fever. I should violate no law, for the proceedings against me were unjust, and the testimony false. I could not yield to Seymore's desire that I should escape, because his was one of the voices that condemned me, and he could open my prison door, if at all, only by an open and honorable confession of his error."

Dinah trembled with joy at hearing Edith speak thus of her willingness to escape, could it be effected with truth; but she would not hint at her hopes till she had arranged her plan with the assistance of Paul.

After a pause, Edith said, "Alas, there is no hope of escape: and why do you fold my hair so carefully? it will never delight your eyes more."

Dinah answered, "Never despair: I see a light behind the cloud: the morning is breaking."

Dinah consulted Paul, and the plan they concerted together was not difficult to exe-

cute. Edith, after long entreaty, yielded to the affectionate creature, and the more readily, as she knew Dinah was so great and universal a favorite in the village that no evil could befal her.

After having her complexion darkened with an herb which Dinah had prepared, Edith exchanged clothes with her humble friend; and at night Dinah remained in the prison, while, with infinite precaution, she eluded the observation of the one person who had been placed at the door to guard her. Paul was secreted without, and the trembling Edith, without being observed, found shelter and concealment in the ruined hut of Phœbe's grandmother.

Paul, as I have said before, was an excellent boatman. Soon as the first streak of dawning light appeared, secretly and in silence, he dipped his oar into the water.

The beautiful morning star shone alone in the sky, and as the shore melted away, Edith strained her eyes to catch the outline of her happy home, and the little mound where her parents reposed.

They reached a place of safety, and Edith was soon made happy by hearing of the safety of her affectionate and humble friend.

It is well known that this fearful delusion of our country ceased as suddenly as it had risen. Edith was one of the last of the accused. When it was discovered that she had escaped, no inquiries were made, and no regret expressed. "The curtain had fallen, and a close was put to one of the most tremendous tragedies of real life. The wildest storm, perhaps, that ever raged in the moral world, instantly became a calm. The tide that had threatened to overwhelm every thing in its fury sank back, in a moment, to its peaceful bed."

What could have been Seymore's emotions when the cloud had vanished, and he stood in the clear sunshine of reason? Happy he was indeed, inexpressibly happy, that his beloved Edith had escaped the most dreadful consequences of this mad delusion.

Whether their union ever took place, I must leave to the imagination of my readers. The young who have never had their hearts stirred with a deeper love than that for a pet lamb, or a canary bird, will reject the thought as impossible. The old, if any who have passed the age of thoughtless amusement should condescend to read these pages, perhaps will judge otherwise. Having learned

from that severe teacher, experience, how prone we are to err, and how often we need forgiveness from each other, as well as from Heaven; having found, also, that the jewel of true love, though sullied by error, and sometimes mixed with baser stones, yet, like the diamond, can never lose its value, — they will cherish the belief that Seymore found, in the devoted affection of Edith, a balm for his wounded spirit, and an unfailing strength for the duties and trials of life.

THE END.